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Rules for preserving Health,

PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO

STUDIOUS PERSONS.

IN THREE TREATISES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

OF THE

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PREFACE.

THE world will wonder at ſeeing a treatiſe upon phyſic come from Spain, and more particularly when they find it written, not by any of the faculty in that country, but by a Spaniſh Friar. The oddity, however, of the doctrines ſtruck me, and, I muſt confeſs, I think there is much truth in many of them, if we make a proper allowance for the difference of the countries. The phyſical gentlemen, I dare ſay, will laugh at the performance, and the more readily, as it ſtrikes at ſome of their eſtabliſhed rules. Such as it is, however, I give it to the

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Public, who, I believe, may put it in the ſame rank with various regimens for preſerving health, which being all different, prove, in ſome meaſure, what the author ſays, that our own feelings will beſt point out what is moſt wholeſome or detrimental. This learned Friar has written upon various other ſubjects with much learning and boldneſs; and it is not long ſince he died in a good old age at Oviedo.

Rules for Preſerving Health.

TREATISE I.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF PHYSIC.

CHAPTER I.

THE too great confidence placed by the world upon the profeſſors of phyſic, is both troubleſome to themſelves, and to their patients. The multiplication of unneceſſary viſits does not leave the former much time for ſtudy, and ſtill leſs for making proper reflections upon the caſes that occur to them; in which the bulk of their knowledge conſiſts. The latter, on the other hand, are for heaping medicines upon medicines, which, taken in quantity, muſt always be hurtful, and often fatal.

Many patients ſink under this load of remedies, like Adrian, who ordered it to be written upon his ſepulchre, that he periſhed by the multitude of his phyſicians. I imagine, therefore, I ſhall do a common ſervice to both parties, if I can correct ſome errors, which have been imbibed by the multitude.

To avoid all equivocations, we muſt divide phyſic into three different ſtates; its ſtate of perfection, of imperfection, and of corruption. By the former I mean that ſtate to which it is poſſible, in the nature of things, for phyſic to attain. It is unlikely that men ſhould ever be able to arrive at the thorough knowledge of all infirmities, and the different remedies adapted to them; nor can it be expected, without a revelation. Far are we, indeed, at preſent, from this happy period. The ſtate of imperfection is all that can be expected in phyſic, as practiſed by learned and prudent men; while ignorant empirics have driven it into that of error and corruption.

I ſhall not here ſay any thing concerning phyſic in its perfection, as it is not to be found in the world; tho', if it were, it would merit all the faith, which the vulgar give to their Doctors.

tors. I ſhall only endeavour to ſhew the fallibility of it in its middle ſtate; from whence we may infer how falſe it is in the laſt.

CHAP. II.

IN order to prove how little patients can truſt to their Phyſicians, it is ſufficient to demonſtrate what we have ſaid, that the medical art, as practiſed by its moſt learned profeſſors is ſtill in a ſtate of great imperfection. But this is already done to our hands, as the Phyſicians of greateſt eminence confeſs it. It will be of no ſervice to quote ancient authors upon this ſubject, as it will naturally be objected to me that phyſic has made great advances ſince their time. I ſhall therefore only cite ſome of the profeſſors of greateſt character among the moderns.

Michael Etmuler, a perſon of great learning, and whom all confeſs to be very eminent in the theory, and admirable in the practice of phyſic; complains in various parts of his work of the little knowledge we have yet attained of ſimples; of the ambiguity of ſymptoms in diſorders;

ders; and of the inefficacy of the remedies now in uſe. In the general preface to his ſecond volume, he ſays (very much to our purpoſe,) "that phyſic can rarely cure more than "the ſymptoms, or effects of the diſeaſe; the "cauſe of which remains untouched, till overpowered by nature." This he aſcribes to our ignorance of cauſes, and the remedies adapted to them; and adds, that all learned Phyſicians lament this deficiency in their art; while thoſe who are ignorant, are perfectly ſatisfied with their knowledge, and think they do wonders. "Sane frequentiſſime in praxi occurrit, ut non "niſi a poſteriori productis norboſis, ac ſymp-"tomatibus occurratur; a priori vero, cauſa, "ſeu ſpina intacta relinquatur: idque vel ob "cauſæ genuinæ ignorantiam, vel appropriati "remedii defectum: medicis ignorantibus op-"timè ſe agere opinantibus: ſcientibus vero "tacite ingemiſcentibus, et ſuos defectus adhuc "deplorantibus."

The great reputation which George Ballivio of Rome obtains among the profeſſors of phyſic, is proved from there having been 10 editions of his work publiſhed in the ſpace of 30 years. This great man, after pointing out the cauſes which hinder the advancement of phyſic, ſays,

ſays, " that it is not to be wondered at, if the " medical books hitherto publiſhed, tho' writ- " ten with the greateſt diffuſeneſs, ſhould con- " tain only pure abſtract philoſophy, and the " ſymptoms ariſing from nature ſhould remain " unconnected and unexplained; while the " very principles of practice are ſo confounded, " that the moſt learned do not know whom " they are to believe, what doctrine to follow, " or the path they ought to purſue in the cure " of diſorders. If (adds he,) we conſider the " preſent ſtate of practical phyſic, we ſhall find " it vitiated with falſe axioms and general " principles, ariſing either from the different " ſects of the practitioners; or from prepoſ- " terous ideal rules; or from the imaginations " and prejudices to which every Phyſician is " ſubject. We muſt conſider, therefore, this " ſcience as yet in its infancy."

Thomas Sydenham, acknowledged by all Europe as the moſt knowing of the laſt century in the practiſe of phyſic, ſpeaks with more uncertainty and doubt than all the reſt, after the ſevere ſtudy of many years, and obſerving with the greateſt attention the various ſteps with which nature proceeds in our diſorders. We hardly read any of his rules that were not plainly dictated with a trembling hand. Urged

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by the nobleſt ſincerity, a prerogative which gives no leſs beauty to his writings than the pure latinity which ſhines in them, he frequently lays before us his doubts, and confeſſes his ignorance. He places but little confidence in what he has experienced himſelf, and hardly any in what is laid down by other authors. In his preface he ſays, " they with great readineſs " write down the cures of various diſorders, " but the difficulty of giving reality to their " words, and making the events correſpond to " their promiſes will be known by thoſe who " conſider that there are many diſeaſes men- " tioned by theſe practical writers, which nei- " ther they nor any other Phyſician yet knew " how to cure." How unpardonable is it in ſuch authors to give, as remedies to the public, what they themſelves know to be ineffectual, and expoſe their readers to be deluded in a cure which may coſt the patient large ſums, and even his health.

Sydenham, in another part of his works (in Epiſt. Ded.) confeſſes, that when, after much ſtudy and continual obſervation, he imagined he had obtained a ſure method of curing all kinds of fevers, " he found his eyes were only " opened to be filled with duſt, tho' glorious

" as

" as that of the olympic games." So perplexed and doubtful did he at length remain, after ſo much ſtudy.

Some years after the publication of the above mentioned works, and in the year 1714, Monſieur Le Francois, a Phyſician of Paris, printed his critical reflexions upon the art of medicine. He joins with the foregoing authors, in lamenting the little progreſs which this ſcience has made. In ſpeaking of phyſical writers, the following words are remarkable, which I tranſlate faithfully from the French language. " The difficulty of making obſer-
" vations with proper care and exactneſs; the
" multitude of infirmities, which renders few
" of them exactly alike in their eſſential cir-
" cumſtances, the contempt in which the pub-
" lic holds obſervers, and the eſteem which they
" give, on the contrary, to bold inventors of
" ſyſtems and their followers, has cauſed but
" few books of much uſe to be found amidſt the
" immenſe number of medical treatiſes, with
" which we are overwhelmed. Perhaps it
" may be ſaid there is not one upon which we
" may place intire confidence." If this declaration be true, what impenetrable clouds overſhadow the profeſſors of this art. Beſides

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the difficulty of diſcerning the few uſeful books, from the multitude of uſeleſs, which few are able to do, eſpecially as there is an equal contention about which are ſuch, the arduous taſk ſtill remains of knowing to what part of them, if any, we may give intire confidence.

The ſame author, in the year 1716, publiſhed a project for the reformation of the medical art, in which he largely ſhews the great imperfection of its preſent practice. In explaining the reaſons of this defect, he places among them the uſeleſsneſs of the preſent books which have been written upon phyſic, and qualifies them with ſtronger expreſſions than the foregoing. He ſays the treatiſes hitherto written on this art, are full of obſcurity, uncertainty, and falſehood. I muſt not omit that he had ſpoken before of the preſent ſtate of phyſic in France, becauſe it conduces much to our information. " Tho', ſays he, there is no country where new regulations are not neceſſary to perfect the ſcience of phyſic, this reformation is no where more wanting than in France, as in no kingdom there is ſo much diſorder in the practice of phyſic, as in this." What he here ſays renders the credulity of the Spaniards

truly ridiculous, who when they ſee a French Phyſician, of but middling reputation, think they have found out a perſon, capable of recalling ſouls from the other world.

Our ingenious countryman, Don Martin Martinez, in his two volumes upon ſceptical phyſic, has learnedly ſhewn the uncertainty of that art. He confutes many maxims eſtabliſhed among the profeſſors of it; and tho' his arguments do not always prove them falſe, they, at leaſt, render them doubtful.

In ſhort, it is almoſt common to all learned and able Phyſicians to confeſs the weakneſs of their art in overcoming infirmities; while the more ignorant boaſt, with the greateſt confidence, of being able to expel thoſe enemies. We may even ſay, that this confidence is a characteriſtical mark, to diſtinguiſh the learned from the ignorant profeſſors. The *Conciliator*, in the definition he gives of a bad Phyſician, has added, as an inſeparable quality, his never confeſſing his own ignorance.

Let the common people therefore conſider, who think they have found the deity of Apollo in an ordinary Doctor, and the virtues of potable

ble gold in the moſt uſeleſs medicines of the ſhop, what truſt can be given to a ſcience which renders thoſe ſo doubtful, who have moſt ſtudied it. If in the rules laid down by the beſt authors, there is ſo much contradiction, how can a Phyſician promiſe recovery to a patient, with entire confidence, when the moſt he can have done, is to have thoroughly ſtudied thoſe rules? If thoſe of greateſt application find themſelves perplexed in the path they ought to take, what certainty can be expected from common doctors, in the cure of our diſorders? If thoſe giants of literature find themſelves ſo weak in counteracting the enemies of our life, what can be expected from others of a pigmean race?

CHAP. III.

BUT it is of no importance that the phyſical authors themſelves ſhew us the uncertainty of their art; for their perpetual contradictions ſufficiently diſcover it. Every thing is diſputed in phyſic, therefore, every thing is doubtful. The continual wars of phyſicians gave Peter of Apono reaſon to ſay, their ſcience ought not to be dedicated to Apollo, but to Mars; of which Cornelius Agrippa gives a ſtill more ſevere interpretation lib. de vanit. ſcient. cap. 83. Their doctrines are more at variance with each other, than the four qualities of the humours which they imagine to be in human bodies. The Centaur Chiron, ſuppoſed to be the firſt maſter of that art, has contributed the confuſion of his two natures to the doctrines of his ſucceſſors. Soon after his invention of this ſcience, ſhe was expoſed like a foundling child; for the ſick were then placed in ſquares, and public ſtreets, that paſſengers might preſcribe for them, whoſe opinions muſt neceſſarily be different. At length, Hippocrates

crates took the orphan under his care, and brought her up in the Iſland of Cos, where the perpetual agitation of the waves were a new preſage of the never-to-be-reconciled contrariety of doctrines.

Next in fame to Hippocrates, and ſhortly after him in time, ſucceeded Praxagoras and Diocles Cariſtius, who changed a little the method of that wiſe old man; for the firſt reduced all diſorders to infirmities in the liquids, and the latter extended the power of the number ſeven, to which Hippocrates had given juriſdiction over particular days, to the climacterical years. Herophilus ſucceeded, who reduced all phyſic to reaſoning and diſpute, without regarding practice or experience, which was the ſame as ſeparating art from nature. Then came Chryſippus, who overturned the eſtabliſhments of his predeceſſors, to meet himſelf with the ſame fate from his diſciple Piſiſtratus, tho' both agreed in baniſhing bleeding and purging from phyſic.

Some remains of this ancient practice continued to the time of Pompey the Great, when Aſclepiades threw down all the doctrines of Hippocrates, whom he inſultingly called Death's Doctor, and termed only thoſe medicines remedies,

medies, which eaſed and ſoothed his patients. This flattery to our ſenſations, and the accidental recovery of a perſon who was carrying to be buried, rendered him maſter of the phyſical world. His publickly defying death contributed much to his ſucceſs, as he bragged he ſhould never be ill; and, in fact, he lived to a great old age; when he broke his neck by tumbling down ſtairs. Themaſon, his diſciple, changed entirely all the practice of his maſter, and became chief of the Methodical ſect, which ought not to have obtained much fame in Rome, ſince Juvenal ſpeaking of his followers, under the name of their chief, ſays

Quot Themaſon, ægros autumno occiderit uno.

Atheneus flouriſhed after him, who attributed all diſorders to an emanation of detached ſpirits. After him appeared Archigenes, founder of the Eclectic ſect, whoſe object was to chooſe whatever was good among the reſt; but he was ſo ſuperſtitiouſly bound to the rules of his art, that he declared he would not omit the obſervation of one of them, tho' a whole city was to periſh by it.

We will paſs over the elegant Cornelius Celſus, who, in his works, does not ſhew a ſtrong

ſtrong adherence to any ſect, and only obſerve, that, like Aſclepiades, he laughed at the obſervance of critical days by unequal numbers, as eſtabliſhed by Hippocrates.—We now come to Galen, a man of vaſt comprehenſion, and ſubtle genius, without doubt, and capable of reſtoring the doctrine of Hippocrates to the empire of the world, if he had not rather choſen to introduce his own, under the ſpecious pretext of commenting, and defending that of Hippocrates. He obtained ſuch wonderful ſucceſs, that there were none to contradict him for many ages, as the fall of the Roman Empire, and the irruption of the barbarians, extinguiſhed all arts and ſciences; and the phyſicians who wrote, only copied from their predeceſſors. The Arabs, who, during the ſlumber of Europe, became maſters of philoſophy and phyſic, ſtill continued followers of Galen; and their principal authors, among whom are Raſis, Averroes, Alkindo, and Avicena, have only added ſuperfluous diſcourſes, and uſeleſs ſubtleties, to his works.

For this length of time was the empire of Galen preſerved, which we may really call barbarous, upon account of the infinite quantity of blood, which this great patron of the lancet

cauſed

cauſed to be ſhed by all the human kind. Till, at the beginning of the ſixteenth century, Paracelſus révived the antient Hermetic philoſophy, and attacked both Hippocrates and Galen with ſuch fury, that he would not leave one of their principles in force. By means of ſome extraordinary cures, perhaps not true, as we have only his diſciple Oporinus for witneſs of them, he acquired a great number of followers, notwithſtanding he died at the age of forty-eight, falſifying what he had bragged of his remedies, that they would lengthen the human life to ages. Among his diſciples Helmoncius, of whom likewiſe prodigious cures are recounted, added to the ideas of his maſter the dream of the ſoul of the world, a fairy which is every where, and does every thing.

The chymical ſchool then roſe up, founded upon experiments made by the violence of fire. It knew no other principles, as well of our health as of all other bodies, than nitre, ſulphur, and mercury. From this appeared Takenius, who raiſed a new faction between acids and alkalines, who, according to his idea, may be called the whigs and tories of nature. This party found ſucceſs, and took whole pro-

vinces

vinces from Galen, tho' without declaring war againſt Hippocrates, whom, on the contrary, they boaſted to be their patron.

In the mean time anatomy began to be ſtudied, from the obſervations made in which ſcience, Silvius, Wallis, and others, formed a ſyſtem entirely different, both from the followers of Galen and the profeſſors of the chymical ſchool. Santorius next produced the plauſible ſyſtem of mathematical phyſic; in which he conſiders the force of ſolids and fluids, by the laws of hydroſtatics and mechanics. The Phyſician is to keep a perfect equilibrium between theſe two powers, and, like Catherine de Medicis, always throw his aſſiſtance into the weaker ſcale, as the total conqueſt of either party threatens ruin to the animal republic.

Thus have ſyſtems changed, and new ones driven out the more ancient, till the uncertainty and tedioufneſs of theſe ſtudies made prudent Phyſicians purſue another path, and follow nature alone, giving confidence to nothing but experiments. As ſoon as the illuſtrious Bacon of Verulam had opened the eyes of phyſicians and philoſophers, and taught them, that by theſe means alone thoſe ſciences could be advanced,

many wiſe practitioners have thrown their eyes on this ſide, and collected with care ſome obſervations, tho' imperfect, as we ſhall hereafter ſhew. This party embraces the moſt famous Phyſicians at preſent in Europe, who, tho' they have bid adieu to Galen, ſtill fight under the banners of Hippocrates, whoſe doctrines, they ſay, always agree with their experiments.

Ballivio, tho' a great promoter of obſervation, and a declared enemy of ſyſtems, was enamoured with the novelty of hydroſtatical phyſic, and could no more abandon it than the youth that rails at the ſex, but follows the woman he loves. But this ſyſtem has no greater advantage than the reſt, except that, like a new born child, its little trifles are pleaſing. He wanted to unite three words, Hippocrates, ſyſtem, and experiment, and in this triumvirate placed the abſolute regulation of practical phyſic. With regard to his reconciling Hippocrates to experience, moſt profeſſors in our times are of his ſide, and the credit of that learned ancient is greatly re-eſtabliſhed. Some, however, pretend, that his precepts ſhould be examined carefully by the light of obſervation; and a few are not wanting, who give no

credit

credit to the rules of the famous Coan; as Michael Lewis Synapius, a Hungarian Phyſician, who, a few years ago, publiſhed a treatiſe of the vanity, falſity, and uncertainty of the aphoriſms of Hippocrates.

We have omitted various things in this hiſtorical recapitulation of phyſic, as its diviſion into empirical, methodical and rational, and who were the protectors of each kind, not to render our eſſay too long, as the many contradictions we have ſeen are ſufficient to prove the great uncertainty of that ſcience.

CHAP. IV.

BUT, after all theſe diſputes, are Phyſicians at length agreed? I fear they are now more at variance than ever, for the variations have multiplied as their books encreaſed. Modern profeſſors are divided between the Hippocratical, Galenical, chymical, and experimental ſchools. As to the followers of Paracelſus and Helmentius, they are now rarely to be met with. All follow different methods, according to the doctrine which they embrace, and it is an abſolute falſehood that they agree in their practice, tho' they differ in their ſyſtems. For this conſult Etmuler, (Inſtitut. Medic. part. 3. chap. 2.) where he ſays, "that according to the variations of the hypotheſes of Phyſicians, their method of cure is entirely different. In the books of thoſe who follow different ſyſtems, we meet with great contradiction in their practical rules. You need only open John Doleo, to ſee that, after having given his opinion of each diſorder according to different ſyſtems, he propoſes a different cure according

according to each. But Phyſicians are not only at variance with each other from following different maxims, but thoſe who purſue the ſame cannot agree. This is ſeen in Spain, where almoſt all the faculty follow the precepts of Galen, and yet, two or three, if you conſult them ſeparately, will rarely follow the ſame method of expelling the diſorder; from whence we may judge, that their unanimity in a conſultation is more owing to their prudence than their opinion. This contrariety of ſentiment does not only ariſe among thoſe who follow the ſame ſyſtem, but even among thoſe who are regulated by the ſame author. The practice of Lazarus Riberius is the abſolute rule of our common Doctors; who, if they read other authors, only make uſe of them for converſation, and not for their guide. And yet we all ſee how much they diſagree, and if we conſult two Phyſicians apart, they will preſcribe different remedies. They place their attention upon different precepts of Riberius, and even if they pitch upon the ſame, they interpret it differently, as I have ſeen more than once. One orders bleeding for a fulneſs of blood, while the other preſcribes a purgative for the badneſs of the ſtomach. If a third is called in, he will think both medicines ineffectual.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

AMONG theſe diſcordant ſentiments of Phyſicians, formed by the difference of authors, by the different interpretation of them, and by the different obſervation and judgment had of the ſymptoms, how is the patient to act? You will ſay he ought to call in the moſt learned, if there are choice; but often will he not know who is the profeſſor of greateſt learning. The applauſe of the world frequently deceives us, and artifice and policy is more the cauſe of this fame than real knowledge. Chance may raiſe an ignorant perſon to reputation, and one misfortune ruin another of the greateſt ability. This happened to Andrew Vaſalio, who eſteeming a Spaniſh gentleman, whom he had attended, to be dead, deſired his body to be opened, but the amputation knife had no ſooner ſtruck his breaſt, than he gave manifeſt ſigns of life, and died of the wound, rather than of his diſorder. But I will ſuppoſe the patient meets with a Phyſi-

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cian of the higheſt line, yet ſtill for this he is not more ſecure. John Argenterio was eſteemed a prodigy of literature, and yet almoſt all the perſons who came under his hands either died or fell into worſe diſorders, till, at laſt, no perſon ſent for him.

Let a Phyſician be ever ſo knowing, there will be always danger in his cure, as it will be contrary to that of other Phyſicians equally learned. All will equally produce reaſons and experience. What Ariadne can give the clue either to the Doctor, or his patient, to eſcape from this labyrinth. There is no rule laid down that is not diſputable, beginning from the famous principle of curing diſorders by their contraries. Indeed, this principle, taken generally, is either falſe or uſeleſs. It is uſeleſs, if, by contrariety on the part of the medicine, we mean any virtue that can expel the cauſe of a diſorder; for, in this caſe, it only means that the cauſe of the diſorder may be expelled by what has power to expel it. It is falſe, if we mean a contrariety in the ſenſible qualities of either; for all contraries of this kind are not remedies, and many things are ſuch that are not contrary. We ſee that all fevers are not cured by cold things. Indeed, they are often improper,

improper, where the languid heat of the fever ought to be increaſed to promote fermentation, and aſſiſt nature in her endeavours to throw off what oppreſſes her. We ſee this alſo in every kind of drug which has no manifeſt contrariety in its qualities to the infirmity which it heals. If the axiom means a contrariety of ſecret qualities, it is likewiſe uſeleſs; for this oppoſition is not to be diſcovered by reaſon, but experience; and after I have found out that ſuch a remedy is contrary to ſuch a diſorder, the axiom is of no ſervice to me. We may alſo ſay that it is falſe in this ſenſe; for there are many remedies which operate not by oppoſition, but union, as all abſorbents, which imbibe the noxious humours by the conformity of their pores with thoſe of the morbific cauſe.

But leaving this principle, which the Phyſicians who follow it abandon in practice, and only find out the contrariety after the diſorder is expelled, we will particularize the difficulties which occur in the moſt common remedies, to ſhew the little faith we can place in them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE firſt that offers is phlebotomy, a remedy which, if we may believe Pliny, men learned from the Hippopotamus, an amphibious animal, who, when he feels himſelf indiſpoſed, rolls his body upon the ſharp points of broken reeds, and after having extracted the proper quantity of blood, cloſes the orifices by wallowing in the clay.

Hippocrates was the firſt who gave reputation to bleeding; Galen raiſed it to ſtill higher eſteem, and greatly extended its uſe. He was followed unanimouſly by all Phyſicians till the time of Paracelſus, who could not hinder its gaining ground again; and to this day it is an eſteemed remedy, though uſed in different manners. It has, however, had great oppoſers, who have blamed it in almoſt all caſes. Among the ancients we may reckon Chryſippus, Ariſtogenes, Eraſiſtratus, Strato, and, omitting others, I believe we may alſo count Aſclepiades.

In later ages we find Paracelſus, Helmontius, Peter Severino, Crollius, Quercetanus, Poterius, Faber, Cruſius, Tozzi, and many other famous men.

Following therefore the common rules of prudence, it cannot be denied that ſo many perſons of great learning give ſome probability to their opinion. Now as they have not only condemned bleeding as uſeleſs, but alſo as hurtful, it follows that there is a probability that bleeding may always do harm. Whoever, therefore, opens a vein, ſubjects himſelf to this doubt. Nor is it of any avail to tell me that on one ſide there is but a ſmall probability, and on the other a much greater; for the aphoriſm tells us that many things that are falſe appear more probable than thoſe which are true. And though the probability of danger in bleeding may be little, yet we ſhall increaſe it in ſuch a manner, that in practice it will appear more than a doubt. However, what I have ſaid is ſufficient for my intention, though, the more reaſons there are for doubting, the greater the danger will appear.

If any perſon tells me that this opinion has nothing to do with probability, as it is contrary to experience, which ſhews bleeding to be often

often ſalutary, Hippocrates will defend me by his aphoriſm, which tells me that experience is fallacious. In fact, except in a few fits where experience ſeems to be declared in favour of bleeding, (and perhaps theſe might be better cured ſome other way) the recurring to this remedy is very doubtful. The authors who declared againſt it were not ignorant of the experiments. They cannot therefore be ſo very clear from having had no power over their opinions. Thoſe who, following Galen, bleed in putrid fevers ſupport their practice by experience, and yet numberleſs are the Phyſicians who regard it as deſtructive. And Doctor Martinez ſays, that this maxim has killed more men than gunpowder.

Experience, if not very conſtant and well known, is a doubtful criterion, for all alledge experience in their favour. If a Phyſician does not give poiſon to his patient, ſome will live while others die. The patron of the remedy which has been given, attributes his life to it if he recovers; but if he dies, ſays his death was owing to the inſuperable force of the diſeaſe. The enemy of this remedy, on the contrary, ſays, the medicine killed him if he dies; and that the ſtrength of nature recovered him

if he ſurvives. We often blame a Phyſician for a death of which he is innocent, and praiſe him with as little reaſon for a recovery to which he gave no aſſiſtance. The fact is, that a patient may ſurvive and even get better after a bleeding given without reaſon, in the ſame manner as he would though the Doctor had given him a wound with a dagger. In the tranſactions of the imperial academy we are told that a nun was cured of a bad fever by having ten pounds of blood drawn from her in the ſpace of a few months. I ſhould be glad to know from Signor Valliſnieri, who informed the academy of this event, in order to encourage thoſe of his profeſſion in the uſe of the lancet, what angel revealed to him that the nun would not have got better, and perhaps in leſs time, if he had not taken ſo much blood from her. We ſhould likewiſe be deſirous of knowing what conſtitution ſhe remained with, after ſo ſevere an attack, as it is certain that many who have remained with life after the violent proceedings of the faculty, are reduced to ſo weak a ſtate of health, as to be capable only of a ſhort and painful exiſtence; while the Phyſician triumphs in his cure, as if he had done more than delay the recovery and ruin the conſtitution. Perhaps, if her Doctor had left

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her more to nature, and treated her with leſs violence, ſhe might not only have recovered, but enjoyed her uſual ſtrength. The ſame author alſo tells us of another perſon, from whom he drew almoſt all the blood out of his veins. That it was extremely acrimonious, and was ſucceeded by a new ſupply of blood of a better ſort. The truth of this event I leave to the judgment of the learned, and only deſire thoſe who are endowed with prudence to tell me whether they would follow this example. The real fact is, that theſe daring Phyſicians place before our eyes one or two patients, the ſtrength of whoſe conſtitution could fight both with the diſorder and the fury of the Doctor; burying under oblivion thoſe numbers who periſhed under their hands. Many obſervations from experience which are found in books, and by which Phyſicians authorize their practice, are as fallacious as what I have here mentioned. From hence I infer, that as there is ſo much uncertainty in experience, as laid before us, that by which bleeding is defended, is not ſufficient to overthrow the opinion which abſolutely rejects it.

However, I will agree that the common notion is true, and that in many caſes bleeding is proper,

proper, and, indeed, I believe ſo. Still the difficulty remains concerning when we are to bleed, and how much blood we are to take away. With regard to the quantity, no rule can be given, as it depends upon the appearance of the ſymptoms, and the ſtrength of the patient, which one Phyſician may judge greater than another. With regard to the proper time of bleeding, opinions are ſo different, that they muſt occaſion in the moſt learned Phyſician the greateſt doubt, and an impoſſibility of not miſtaking it at times. He will read in ſome authors that bleeding is neceſſary in ſuch a diſorder, and under ſuch circumſtances. He will read in others, that it is fatal under the ſame diſorder and circumſtances. Which of theſe is he to follow? The patient generally has no difficulty in obeying his Doctor; for as he hears him talk with confidence, he little thinks how much what he orders is diſputed. If, however, when the lancet is opening his vein, he could hear twenty or thirty very learned and experienced authors that are crying out to the mind of his Phyſician, "hold thy hand, do not bleed him, thou deſtroyeſt him!" how would he behave upon this occaſion? But it will be anſwered, that the Phyſician weighs the probability of both opinions. How do we know he

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weighs it well, when ſo many are of a different way of thinking?

I cannot tell when our followers of Galen bleed with propriety, but I am confident they do it wrong many times; for they hold a putrid fever as a general cauſe for that operation; when it is certain, from the beſt authors, and our own reaſon, that the loſs of blood muſt often do harm. It hinders the fermentation of the diſorder, which ought to be promoted, that nature may throw off the particles which oppreſs her. A fever is an inſtrument of nature to exterminate the noxious humours, as the incomparable practitioner with regard to fevers, Sydenham, ſays, and with him the moſt learned Phyſicians of our times, "Cum et febris naturæ inſtrumentum fuerit ad hujus ſecretionis opus debitâ operâ fabricatum" (fol. mihi 100.) And a little lower, "Febris naturæ eſt machina ad diffflanda ea, quæ ſanguinem malè habent." Lucas Tozzi obſerved, that thoſe diſorders, where no fever is raiſed, are much the longeſt. Every perſon knows the power of fevers in curing colds, fits, attacks of the gout, and other diſorders. Celſus, and before him Hippocrates, recommended the febrile agitation as uſeful in many diſtempers. But common Phyſicians always

always conſider a fever as their capital enemy, and proceed againſt it with bleeding and purging, which is the ſame as with fire and ſword. I am of the opinion of Etmuler, who relates that ſome authors have obſerved that the blood was conſumed by the ardor of the fever in the bodies of thoſe who died of that diſorder; from whence, inferring how improper it is to aſſiſt in the draining of it with the lancet, he concludes in theſe words, "I can have nothing to do with butchers of this kind, who drain ſo uſeleſsly the treaſures of our frame."

I muſt not here omit that the inferences made from the colour of the blood are very uncertain, as it changes very much when it comes out of the veſſels, and as every perſon has a different kind of blood, which is ſo adapted to his conſtitution that he could not live without it, bad as it may ſeem to the Phyſician, for this reaſon, the invention of transfuſing blood from the veins of a man in health into thoſe of a ſick perſon has proved ſo ineffectual. This is the opinion of Etmuler, (inſt. medic. cap. 4.) The judgment we can form of blood has been deſervedly treated as uncertain by Helmontius, who alſo ſays, that every perſon has a particular kind of his own, and even in

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that of perſons in health there is a great difference. Beſides, the colour of blood ariſes from cauſes very different from thoſe to which it is aſcribed by the Phyſicians. The famous anatomician, Philip Verheyen, obſerved, that if you mixed ſpirit of vitriol with blood it turns it black, therefore blackneſs is not a certain ſymptom of heat. He alſo found that alkalines gave it a red colour. In ſhort, whoever knows that two drops of a red liquid, called lac verginalis, can give a milk colour to a whole baſon of water, will lay no ſtreſs upon what common philoſophy ſays with regard to the cauſes of difference in colours.

CHAP. VII.

FROM bleeding we muſt paſs to the other leg of phyſic, to uſe the expreſſion of Galen, and this is purging. All Phyſicians unanimouſly acknowledge in purges ſomething of a malignant quality, which muſt render them in a degree noxious. Whether in certain diſorders, and at particular times, they may be uſeful is in doubt; therefore the detriment is certain, and the advantage doubtful.

Thoſe who love taking phyſic, believe that cathartics tear only the vicious humours out of your body, an error under which I lay for a long time, till my own experience, and the reading of good authors corrected me. It is certain that they ſeparate both the uſeful and noxious, and melt, tear away, and precipitate thoſe juices which nouriſh us, together with the excrementitial humours.

We muſt likewiſe obſerve that not every excrementitial humour, though incapable of nouriſhing us, is to be conſidered as uſeleſs to to the body. Great part of it has its office, and Nature makes uſe of it for her particular ends. The humour of the bile is neceſſary to precipitate the dregs of our food, and the acid in our ſtomach to give us appetite to eat it. Purges, therefore, may be hurtful many ways by the bad impreſſion of their deſtructive quality, by tearing from our bodies part of the nutritive juice, and by evacuating humours, which, though incapable of nouriſhing us, are neceſſary for the functions of nature. To which we may add the conducting part of the excrements of our body through ways which nature has not deſtined for their expulſion, which may poſſibly cauſe ſome hurt to thoſe paſſages; ſince,

ſince, if ſharp humours are forced through narrow paths, ſome damage may be done to the fibres of them.

The diviſion of purges, from the effect they cauſe upon the humours to which they are appropriated, as that ſome carry off the bile, others the phlegm, &c. though generally received, is an imaginary diſtinction in the opinion of the moſt learned authors. They aſſure us, that there is no purge that does not evacuate indifferently all kinds of humours which fall within the ſphere of its activity, and that the differently coloured excrements, according to the difference of purges, only proceeds from the tincture given them by the medicine, and not from any different juices being precipitated, as perſons have imagined. What I can aſſure for certain is, that if a man of the beſt conſtitution ſhould repeatedly purge himſelf with flower of thyme, a cathartic appropriated to the melancholy humours from the blackneſs of its excrements, will always void humours of that colour. This I know with entire certainty. Now ſuch a quantity of it could not be found in the bodies of ſix hypochondriacal perſons, as it is the juice which we have in leaſt abundance.

It may be replied to me, that notwithſtanding purges expel both what is uſeful and vicious at the ſame time, yet it may be proper to take them when nature is more hurt by the bad which ſhe retains, than by the good which ſhe would throw off. This is all that can be ſaid in favour of cathartics. I anſwer to this, firſt, that the Phyſician ought to be well aſſured things are in this ſituation, otherwiſe he will act like the Turks at the ſiege of Rhodes, who, ſeeing ſome troops of theirs mixed in an aſſault with the Chriſtians of the garriſon, with barbarous fury pointed their artillery againſt both, and made equal ſlaughter both of friends and enemies.

But when can the Phyſician come to the certain knowledge of things being in this ſituation? It can rarely, if ever, be the caſe in common diſorders. The Phyſicians are diſputing whether we ought to purge at the beginning of fevers or not. Hippocrates is againſt it, except the body ſwells, and tells us to wait till the matter is ripe to be carried off. But when the matter is ripe nature will ſeparate it of herſelf, as we experience every day. Therefore, a purge is unneceſſary, and the making uſe of it is like bringing in auxiliary troops

troops after you have conquered the enemy. Reaſon and experience have convinced me that nature never fails to bring this work to perfection, except in ſome rare caſe ſhe is hindered by a particular obſtruction. They tell us there is no fear of a relapſe, if the patients are purged when the matter is ripe; but this is rather preventing a future diſorder, than curing that we have at preſent. Beſides, how do Phyſicians know that relapſes are cauſed by not purging at that time? Many fall back that take phyſic, and many that do not. Yet, I ſhould imagine, the relapſe does not depend upon that cauſe, but upon ſome portion of the morbific matter ſtill remaining indigeſted, and without being put in motion in our bodies. After lying hid during all the preceding attack, it breaks out with greater danger of the patient, as it finds his forces more weakened. Although this idea may not be certain, it is probable, and probability is enough to render a Phyſician doubtful of a purge being then neceſſary.

Fullneſs of blood is conſidered as an inexcuſable cauſe of purging at the beginning of the diſorder. The moſt learned Martinez has rendered its neceſſity doubtful even in this caſe.

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As this cauſes an unquiet motion of the juices, which threaten to moleſt ſome vital part, part of them they ſay muſt be expelled at all hazards. But the ſame motion is experienced at the beginning of the ſmall pox, and yet the beſt practitioners never purge then. Thus is the uſe of cathartics filled on all hands with doubt and hazard.

I muſt likewiſe add, that notwithſtanding the harm which may be done by theſe violent medicines, they have not the force which is attributed to them of rooting the morbific matter out of our bodies. Formerly, when I had more faith in theſe remedies, I uſed to take them when I ſuffered a periodical indiſpoſition, which even ſtill oppreſſes me. Its common ſymptoms are an extreme heavineſs in my limbs; a total loſs of appetite; and an oppreſſion even upon the faculties of my mind, which continues about two months. I believed, together with my Phyſicians, that it was cauſed by too great an abundance of excrementitial juices, and conſequently that I muſt uſe purges for my remedy. But I here declare they never did me the leaſt ſervice, though I uſed all kinds of cathartic medicines during the ſpace of ſeven years; varying the ſpecies and quantity in many

many ways. I may ſay the ſame thing with regard to the diet I obſerved. After a certain period the diſorder finiſhed by ſmall eruptions breaking out in different parts of my body. Making reflexions upon theſe repeated experiences, it ſeems to me that many of our diſorders ariſe from a ſmall portion of noxious matter intermixed with our frame, which is ſo deeply buried in our bodies, or for ſome other reaſon, which I know not, is not ſubject to the activity of cathartics, but obeys the will of Nature alone, who has her fixed period to drive it out, without all the ſpurs in the apothecary's ſhop being able to accelerate her courſe. The term being at length arrived, Nature triumphs over her enemy, of ſmall ſtature indeed, but of mighty force, and expels it from her empire in eruptions. Some years I remained in this uncertainty, not truſting to the ſmallneſs of my own experience, till, reading Etmuler, I found my opinion authorized by this great profeſſor. After treating (part. 3. inſtit. medic. cap. 5.) of the great deſtruction which purges cauſe in the human body; he ſays they are alſo uſeleſs, in the following words. "It is "not in their power to reach the ſmall ſeeds of "our diſorders; and many indiſpoſitions conti-"nue obſtinate, after the repeated uſe of ca-

"thartics.

" thartics. We may therefore conclude, that " purging medicines, beſides the damages they " occaſion, only ſearch the branches, and do " not touch the main ſeat of the matter which " cauſes our diſorder; unleſs, indeed, it ſhould " lie in the bowels, or other places through " which they paſs, when their utility is not to " be doubted. However, the caſe is very of- " ten diſputable, as Phyſicians are frequently " undecided whether the complaint lies in the " firſt paſſages or not."

With regard to the choice of purges, every Phyſician follows his own fancy, and there is not one of theſe medicines that has not commonly their particular favourers. Thoſe which paſs quietly, and without cauſing pain, are generally preferred. I confeſs, I have my difficulties upon this ſubject, as the pain may perhaps not be cauſed immediately by the medicine, but by the ſharp humour which it has put in motion. If this be the caſe, we ought to prefer thoſe purges which give pain, as expelling the ſharp humours, and abandon the hypocritical tranquillity of thoſe which glide unperceived through us, as it may be derived from their taking along with them a great quantity of the nutritive juice, whoſe ſoftneſs may render

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their paſſage imperceptible. We may therefore with reaſon judge that theſe mild purges only carry off the bland and innocent juices, which by their ſuavity hinder any pain in the entrails they paſs through. This is only an idea of my own, which I ſubmit with humility to the examination of any learned Phyſician, as alſo every other which is not ſupported by ſome great author.

After purges it is natural to paſs to their aſſociate, clyſters, of which Phyſicians make uſe when they are not able to apply the former, to relax the bowels, under ſuppoſition, that the uſe of mild clyſters can never do any harm. However, the famous Sydenham ſtrongly forbids their uſe, as well as of all other evacuations, in every fever where the fermentation is relaxed, becauſe they render it ſtill more tardy in riſing to a head. He ſays even more, that in all fevers, at the time of their decreaſe, any evacuation is hurtful, and that he always endeavoured at that time to keep the body of the patient coſtive. All profeſſors know that in the manner of treating fevers Sydenham alone gives probability to an opinion. Let thoſe, therefore, who believe in the coherency

and ſecurity of medical rules, make all theſe differences agree together if they can.

CHAP. VIII.

IN fine, there is nothing certain in phyſic. One Phyſician abhors a remedy, which another idolizes. What noxious effects do not ſome, and what ſurpriſing virtues do not others proclaim to be in hellebore. The ſame may be ſaid of antimony. Precious ſtones, which are the principal ſupport of Apothecaries, are blamed not only as uſeleſs, but even as hurtful, by excellent writers. For my own part, I believe that the moſt common herb in the field is of more uſe in phyſic than all the emeralds of the eaſt. What ſhall I ſay of all thoſe cordials, which are only ſuch in name? Gold cheareth the heart while in the purſe, but not when forced into the ſtomach. How can our vital heat derive any virtue from it, when the moſt active fire can make no alteration upon that too precious metal. The virtue of the ſtone called bezoar, which enters into almoſt all cordials, is a mere fable, if we believe, as I think we may, Nicholas Bocangelino, Phyſician

cian of the Emperor Charles V. Jeronomo Rubeo, Phyſician to Pope Clement VIII. ſays, that having many times uſed the moſt famous bezoar ſtones which were in the poſſeſſion of princes and noblemen, he could never find the leaſt efficacy in them, and many other learned authors are of the ſame opinion.

Expenſive and rare medicines pleaſe many Phyſicians, and all Apothecaries. They ſeem to want to preſcribe, as Pliny ſaid, the aſhes of the Phœnix. The ſame may be obſerved of all exotic remedies, and which come to us from diſtant countries. The Phyſicians find their account in them, as they ſet off their great knowledge; and the Apothecaries are not ſorry to ſee them preſcribed, as they encreaſe their capital. But as Pliny ſays in another place, and experience ſhews us, cheap remedies, which we have at home, are much more uſeful and ſecure. "Drugs, cries he, are brought from "the red ſea to cure ulcers, when every coun- "tryman ſups upon what is more conducive to "that end at home."

Dr. Duncan, of Montpellier, tells us of a French Phyſician, who uſed to preſcribe coffee to all his patients. However, we are all now

perſuaded, that neither coffee or tea can be of much uſe to us in our diſorders. Even the moſt famous remedies are not without their oppoſers. Bark we know has many enemies, and Farnelio even declaimed againſt mercury, though without reaſon, ſince all the world has experienced the ſingular virtue of this powerful mineral.

To this uncertainty of phyſic, upon account of different opinions, we may add the change of faſhion, which has not leſs power over this ſcience, than in our manner of dreſſing. While ſome remedies loſe their vogue, others are coming into it. The ſame happens to phyſic as to Alexander in his conqueſts, who, while he was ſubmitting new provinces to his yoke, loſt thoſe which he left behind his back. All remedies upon their firſt invention have been famous, from whence are derived the magnificent names that are given to them, of the angelic water, the golden julep, and others of that nature. But, now-a-days, neither the golden julep, nor the angelic water, nor the panacean pills, nor all thoſe other compoſitions to which the powerful activity of mercury has given credit, dare to hold up their heads before Engliſh ſalts, which I eſteem a doubtful remedy, upon account of its purging with ſo much mildneſs. However,

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both this and other medicines, which are now in vogue, will be dethroned by freſh noſtrums, which time will produce, as the fate of this ſcience is to be in perpetual fluctuation. What am I to ſay of the virtues which are falſely attributed to many remedies? The authority of Vallas is ſufficient for me upon this ſubject, who aſſures us, that the Phyſicians never ſpeak with leſs truth, or foundation, than when they are treating of the power of medicines.

CHAP. IX.

I Will conclude what I have to ſay concerning remedies with the important obſervation, that, though they are well choſen and properly adapted, they muſt be hurtful when they are given in great quantities.

Impediunt certè medicamina plura ſalutem.

It is in this where common Phyſicians principally err. "O, my ſcholars, exclaims Ballivio, with how few remedies are diſorders cured! How many has a load of phyſic deprived of life!" Sydenham laments this diſorder in various places, and perſuades practitioners to proceed with

with more ſparing hand in the writing of receipts, and to truſt much more to the power of nature; ſince it is a great error to think that ſhe always needs the aſſiſtance of art.

True it is, that in this infamous practice the Doctors, perhaps, are not ſo much to blame as the patients themſelves, who are always begging for ſomething to eaſe their complaints. This, perhaps, is the greateſt error of the vulgar in the uſe of phyſic. They hold that Doctor as the beſt who heaps receipts upon receipts, and when, by the fury of his proceeding, he has hurried the patient to the grave, they ſay that every thing has been done that was in the power of medicine, when, on the contrary, every thing has been done that the moſt ſtupid ignorance, or the moſt criminal condeſcendency, could dictate. Leonard Botalo, Phyſician of Henry III. King of France, ſays, that theſe obliging Phyſicians, who write whenever their patients deſire it, are the moſt hurtful of all.

Thoſe who defend the doctrine of critical days, have nothing to anſwer to the objection which is made that experience does not prove them, but that the unſeaſonable uſe of remedies hinders or precipitates nature in her courſe.

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From hence two conſequences may be derived. The firſt is, that all Phyſicians err in the uſe they make of remedies, ſince there are diſorders, if they will confeſs ingeniouſly the truth, as Lucas Tozzi aſſures us, which obſerve their criſis exactly according to the periods that are marked out. The ſecond is, that the Phyſician ought to remain in entire tranquillity, not to diſturb nature by ordering any medicine, ſince there is none but muſt make ſome change. Doctor Boix has ſaid much upon this ſubject, though his rules, perhaps, are not to be entirely followed. I am confident, however, that the quantity of medicines, which common Phyſicians order, weakens greatly the force of nature, and, at a time when ſhe wants all her vigor to overcome the enemy, diſturb her in the operations ſhe is performing to throw off the cauſes of the diſorder.

With regard to ignorant Phyſicians, it is in vain to perſuade them of this truth, for ignorance is always indocile. It will be equally fruitleſs to convince thoſe who have any underſtanding with the Apothecary, or have themſelves ſome intereſt in the vent of the medicines; but their ſouls are in a much worſe ſituation than the bodily healths of their patients. I flatter my-

myſelf there are but few of theſe; for to imagine Phyſicians are in general ſo wicked could only be ſaid by the calumnious Cornelius Agrippa, lib. de varit. ſcient. although he himſelf was of the profeſſion. On the contrary, I believe that moſt Phyſicians are perſons of conſcience, which I attribute to their being ſo much with dying perſons, where they are continually hearing words of edification, and ſeeing examples of Chriſtian piety.

There are indeed ſome, and not a few, who preſcribe more than they ought, to keep up their credit, becauſe they find they are diſcharged, and others ſent for, if they do not order ſomething new every day. I muſt inform theſe of the weighty obligation they have in conſcience not for any worldly reſpects to paſs the bounds which reaſon preſcribes to them. Neither the danger of not being ſent for, nor the fear of being cried down by the Apothecaries, nor the ſhame of appearing unknowing among the illiterate, can excuſe them in the eye of heaven, from whatever damage may reſult by their being too free in their preſcriptions.

Many take a middle path, which is to order light things, that can cauſe no harm, if they do

no good. But if what they order comes under the liſt of medicines, it muſt make ſome change, and if therefore it is not of ſervice, it muſt do harm. Beſides, the Phyſician is not juſtified in cauſing his patients to ſpend their money in what will be of no ſervice to them, and will in conſcience be obliged to repay the expence. Nor will it be of any uſe to him that his patients deſired him to preſcribe for them; for they did it under a ſuppoſition that it would be of ſervice to them; but if he will aſſure them with conſtancy of the inutility of the medicine, they certainly would not wiſh to take it.

CHAP. X.

AFTER having pointed out ſo many heads which concur to prove the uncertainty of phyſic, it will naturally be aſked me how it is poſſible that the experience and obſervation of ſo many ages has not taught us what is hurtful and what the contrary? To this I have already anſwered in what I have ſaid concerning the fallibility of experience. To which I add, that the obſervations collected in ſome authors are ſo far from giving us information,

that they deceive us more, and are ſo defective as not to merit that name. Many are founded upon one caſe alone, in which a perſon may be various ways deceived. Sometimes the inſincerity of a Phyſician may brag of his remedies ſucceeding upon one patient, and paſs over its having failed in two. Beſides, the circumſtances may not be exactly related, for there are many in the ſame diſorder, which may render a medicine either proper or hurtful. Perhaps more remedies than one may have been given, and it may be difficult to know which performed the cure, though a Phyſician will always aſcribe it to his favourite. If there is more than one Phyſician, they will always attribute the ſucceſs to the remedy which they preſcribed, even though the diſorder did not quit its hold immediately. If we are to allow much time to the effect of any ſpecific, the cure may, perhaps, be owing to nature alone, for we ſee many complaints removed without taking any thing at all.

The obſervations of Riberius are current every where, and are, perhaps, thoſe which have been circulated with greateſt applauſe. The number of them amounts to ſome hundreds, yet you will hardly find one which is not defective

fective in ſome of the above points. It is curious to ſee this author brag of curing a bilious cholic, cent. 4. obſerv. 75. with four bleedings, and four purges properly intermixed with clyſters, emollient, anodyne, and other medicines, in which cure many days muſt neceſſarily be conſumed, when this diſorder, left to nature, or at leaſt managed with much leſs phyſic, is generally terminated in leſs time. It is very probable that the patient would have recovered more ſpeedily, if the furious proceedings of the Phyſician had not deſtroyed his ſtrength. How often does he attribute the victory to his theriacal water, or ſome other medicine of his invention, though various others have been applied. Much more could I ſay of the uſeleſsneſs of theſe obſervations, which are ſuch only in name. The making them with advantage, requires much learning, perſpicacity and ſincerity, qualifications not to be found united without ſome difficulty. It muſt, however, be confeſſed that ſome modern authors have laboured in this matter with much greater care and prudence than the antient, and if their ſucceſſors imitate them, phyſic may be much advanced, though at preſent extremely imperfect.

CHAP. XI.

I AM confident, that what I am now writing will not pleaſe the faculty. Indeed, I expect to bring the anger of ſome of them upon my head. I make no doubt but all thoſe of little learning, and ſtill leſs underſtanding, will attack me with violence, as they think they poſſeſs a treaſure of infallible doctrine in that author whom they follow. Beſides, if perſons take leſs phyſic, they will ſend leſs for Phyſicians, and therefore ſome of them muſt be diſcarded. But they may be very eaſy upon this head, for the world will always be the ſame; nor can any writer turn aſide the impetuous courſe of prejudice and univerſal cuſtom. How much, and, indeed, even beyond truth, has Quevedo written againſt phyſic and Phyſicians in Spain; Petrarch in Italy, and firſt Montaigne, and afterwards Moliere, in France. Every perſon reads and commends their writings, but things go on in the ſame manner as before. I ſhall be contented to perſuade only a few that they ruin their health by thoſe very means they make uſe of to preſerve it.

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There will be different opinions among Phyſicians of learning and diſcretion. Some are endued with ſo generous a ſpirit, as to publiſh themſelves the imperfections of phyſic, and their own uncertainty. Others, however, of a leſs illuſtrious way of thinking, are not diſpleaſed to ſee that the world places more confidence in their ſcience than it ought; and as the high eſtimation of a profeſſion redounds to the honour of thoſe who follow it, they will not be flattered with what we have ſaid againſt it. This cauſe, perhaps, raiſed ſo many virulent pens againſt Dr. Boix, whoſe ſincerity and zeal for the public good deſerved a different treatment.

That ſome Phyſicians of learning politically conceal the uncertainty of their art is an undoubted fact.—Ballivio, who has lamented at full length the wretched condition in which phyſic was, notwithſtanding, attacks more than once ſome authors who publiſhed its fallibility to the world. He calls them imprudent to act in this manner, as by their ſincerity they ſink the profeſſors from the eſteem they enjoy. Gaſper de les Reyes (ques. 20.) places the danger of his profeſſion in ſo very high a light that he ſays, there is no caſe in which a Phyſician

ſician can act with certainty, which is much farther than I have gone. In another part of his work he ſays, that the moſt learned Phyſicians often make miſtakes. However, this enlightened profeſſor did not chooſe to enlighten the world in an equal degree. After telling us, that Phyſicians may diſcover their errrors to the learned, as to perſons who know the great obſcurities and inſuperable difficulties of phyſic, he ſays that they ought to conceal them from the rude and ignorant, who imagine the Doctor knows more than he really does, or is capable of being informed of. The reaſon he gives, is, that it is of no uſe, either to the Phyſician or the patient, that he ſhould make a confeſſion of his miſtakes. But I, on the contrary, find much uſe to the patients, and not a little to the Phyſicians, in this diſintereſted information. To the patients, as being informed of the uncertainty of the ſcience; that there is hardly a remedy without danger; that the wiſeſt Phyſicians often miſtake; that many who get well, owe their cure to nature, and are only indebted to the Phyſician for retarding her operations; they will be more cautious in taking medicines. By this they will preſerve their ſtrength entire; they will not hurt their health, or ſpend the money they want for their family,

family, in the Apothecary's ſhop. They will leave thoſe little diſorders to Nature, which ſhe herſelf cures, and in which, even ſuppoſing phyſic to be of ſome aſſiſtance, the damage it cauſes, will, on the other hand, be more than an equivalent. They will be content with regulating their diet, or at moſt, with taking ſome little medicine in thoſe diſorders which belong to their conſtitution, which no Phyſician in the world can cure, however they may talk of eradicating them. By reaſon of this information many ladies may become leſs burthenſome to their huſbands and families; many perſons may become uſeful to the public, who are now ſpending all their time in taking phyſic. Theſe and many other advantages, which the knowledge of the uncertainy of the ſcience carries along with it, have made me publiſh theſe informations, and the Phyſicians ought in conſcience to join with me in contributing to undeceive the public.

It will even be advantageous to the Phyſicians themſelves, at leaſt to thoſe of learning, as they will never want ſalaries and employments without they are baniſhed from the world, as it is ſaid they were from Rome. They will not likewiſe be troubled unneceſſarily

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by fanciful patients, and even by people in perfect health. The vapouriſh lady, who now thinks ſhe cannot live without a Doctor's feeling her pulſe every inſtant, will not be ſending for them continually, nor will hypochondriacs be teazing them, who, like him in Moliere, are crying out, though they feel no pain; and the decrepid old man will be convinced, that all the drugs in the ſhop cannot remove him many paces from the grave. This will give profeſſors time to apply more to their ſtudies, and reflect upon what they have read and experienced, as alſo to aſſiſt at anatomical diſſections. The moſt eminent will be able to write uſeful books. By theſe means will they become more learned, and phyſic will from day to day approach to that ſtate of perfection of which it is capable.

It muſt not be thought that I am an enemy to the ſcience. On the contrary, I have a great eſteem for it. I know that the Holy Ghoſt recommends it, though it might be replied to me, that the phyſic recommended in the bible is not that which is practiſed in our times. It is certain, that there are diſorders which Nature herſelf cannot overcome, and yet are conquered by the aſſiſtance of a Phyſician, as is clear

in the venereal infection. I confeſs, that in dangerous illneſſes it is proper to recur to their aſſiſtance, and that many times the ſpeedy effect of the medicine ſhews that the relief was entirely occaſioned by it, as Nature left to herſelf rarely makes ſudden changes. I allow that many wonders have been done by opium, bark, emetics, and other remedies of known activity. I am only hurt that Phyſicians ſhould promiſe things which ſurpaſs their knowledge and power, and that, while they walk in darkneſs, they ſhould boaſt of their being crowned with light.

If I have rather exaggerated the uncertainties of curing any diſorder, this alſo may be right, as the common people are inclined to give a blind aſſent to the precepts of the moſt ignorant Phyſician, which makes it neceſſary to incline their minds a little on the other ſide, that they may remain in the due medium. Although, in this Eſſay, I have only ſpoken under the authority of illuſtrious authors, ſince what I have laid down from my own opinion is only propoſed as a doubt, and not as a doctrine, yet, if any perſon ſhould think proper to write againſt me, he will give me an opportunity of adding much that I have left out not to render this treatiſe too long.

I conclude, by exhorting all perſons when they chooſe their Phyſician to have the following circumſtances preſent to their mind. Firſt of all, let him be a good Chriſtian, as bearing before his eyes the ſtrict account he muſt render to God for his neglects; he will attend with more ſerioufneſs to the performance of his duty, and will apply with more attention to the ſtudy of his profeſſion. Secondly, let him be a perſon of judgment, and of a mild diſpoſition, as a fiery temper is apt to blind the judgment of the moſt prudent. Thirdly, he muſt not boaſt of the certainty and greatneſs of the ſcience, for as it is undoubted that there is no ſuch certainty, he who proclaims it muſt either be very ignorant, or an impoſter. Fourthly, let him not be addicted to any philoſophical ſyſtem, by which he regulates his practice, being more expoſed to error than another who follows his own experience, and that of the beſt practical authors. Fifthly, let him not be a great preſcriber of phyſic, eſpecially of ſtrong medicines, except in very urgent caſes, which allow of no time, as it is certain that every one who preſcribes much muſt be a bad Phyſician, even though he knew by heart all that is written about the ſcience.

Sixthly, take care that he obſerves and gets exact information of all the ſymptoms of a diſ-

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order, which are many, and derived from various cauſes. Common Doctors, after juſt feeling your pulſe, and looking upon the urine, take up their pen to write. The pulſe gives but very dark intelligence, and the urine is ſtill more fallible; nor can we have a certain idea of a diſorder and of its cauſes, except now and then, where it is very well known, without attending to many other circumſtances, which precede and attend the complaint. From negligence in this point many eſſential errors have been committed in the naming of diſorders. How many times has a pleuriſy been attributed to wind, and the contrary!

Seventhly, a Phyſician ſhould generally be able to foretell the events that are to follow. I ſay generally, becauſe never to err in this point is the part of angels, and not of men. All my former inſtructions may almoſt be comprehended in this; and from a Phyſician foretelling what is to come, an illiterate perſon may know who is the wiſeſt, and who is the moſt ignorant. The man who is true in his prognoſtics muſt know the preſent ſtate of the diſorder, ſince he can only judge of what is to happen from what he ſees at preſent. Whoever, on the contrary, errs in making them cannot know any thing

of phyſic. We ſhould not doubt of ſaying, that an almanac maker, who miſtook the times of the full moon and eclipſes, knew nothing of aſtronomy.

Some conſider the art of curing and foretelling as different, and that one Phyſician may be famous in telling us what will happen in a diſorder, and another for the curing of it. But it is a great miſtake; ſince, from what we have ſaid, it is impoſſible that he who errs in the prognoſtics can ſucceed in the cure. This error muſt be owing to his not underſtanding the diſorder, which he can therefore not cure unleſs by chance. Even if it was poſſible to ſeparate theſe two talents, he who makes the prognoſtics juſt ought always to be preferred. The reaſon is ſtrong, becauſe by miſtaking the cure, the temporal ſafety of the patient's body is only hazarded; but by erring in the prognoſtics, the eternal ſalvation of their ſouls is oftentimes indangered. In a malignant and deceitful diſorder, an ignorant Phyſician will often tell you that it is nothing but a light indigeſtion of the ſtomach, which will be cured with a julep. This makes both nurſes and patient neglect thoſe chriſtian preparations, with which death ought to be expected. In the mean time a ſud-

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den delirium ſeizes upon the manſion of the brain, and he dies like a heathen, or even like a brute. How often does this happen by ignorant profeſſors being allowed to practiſe phyſic. The crime commonly charged upon Phyſicians is the killing of our bodies, but ſometimes they are guilty of the eternal death of our ſouls.

There are ſome, however, who, either more cautious or more deceitful, by a common artifice take exactly the contrary method. Whereever they meet with a ſlight fever they tell you, with wrinkled front and arched eyebrows, that the diſorder is very ſerious. A multiplicity of orders are given, and the whole family is put into confuſion. In the mean time the Phyſician offers to attend the patient every day, and do all that lies in the power of his art. The conſequence of theſe previous ſteps is, that, if the perſon dies, all praiſe the underſtanding of the Doctor, who, from the very beginning, penetrated the hidden malignity of the diſeaſe; if the patient gets well, they cry up the cure, and thank heaven for having directed them to ſo knowing a Phyſician, who was able to overcome ſo dangerous a complaint.

Undoubtedly Phyſicians of this ſort will not willingly let their patients die without the ſacraments

craments of the church, but they make them often die without their having a fatal diſorder; for their threats falling upon low ſpirits, they are ſunk to ſuch a degree that the diſorder, which was nothing in the beginning, becomes dangerous. This is bad, though what I mentioned in a former paragraph was worſe. Remember, therefore, O, Phyſicians, (I ſpeak to you, who without ſtudy embrace this profeſſion, and viſit more patients than you can poſſibly take care of) and bear in your minds that the guardian Angels of thoſe whom you have attended will appear before God, and place before your view, as well thoſe who have ſuffered an untimely death by your neglect, as thoſe whoſe final condemnation has been ſealed through your ignorance.

RULES for preſerving HEALTH.

CHAP. I.

PHYSICIANS know but little of the cure of diſorders, but they neither know, nor can know any thing of taking care of people who are in health, particularly with regard to the two main points, of eating and drinking. I dare ſay what I here lay down will ſcandalize both thoſe who underſtand the ſcience and thoſe who do not; but it is to be proved to demonſtration, from the variety of our conſtitutions, to which we muſt regulate both the quantity and the quality of what we eat. That nouriſhment which may be wholeſome to one, may be noxious to another. The quantity which may be too great for one may be little for another. This union of quantity and quality, with regard to any individual perſon, can only be known by experience. Of this every man bears within his own

own breaſt a monitor; nor can the Phyſician know any thing of it, but from what you tell him. What occaſion therefore have I to recur to a Doctor to inform me what I ought to eat and drink, if he can only know it by my telling him what agrees with me, what I digeſt eaſily, what ſets well upon my ſtomach, &c.

Tiberius Cæſar uſed to laugh at thoſe who wanted Phyſicians at the age of thirty years, and ſaid, that at this time of life every perſon ought to know by experience how to regulate his conduct with regard to health. In fact, this maxim ſucceeded well with the Emperor, for notwithſtanding he lived very intemperately, he arrived to ſeventy-eight years of age, and perhaps might have lived longer if his ſucceſſor Caligula had choſen to wait the ſlow hand of decay; for all hiſtorians agree that his death was accelerated, but they differ in the manner. Though this maxim of Tiberius may not be true in general, yet it is undoubtedly ſo with regard to what we eat and drink.

We cannot ſay that any kind of nouriſhment is abſolutely noxious. This is not my opinion, but that of Hypocrates, who proves it in his book of ancient medicine. Speaking of cheeſe,

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he ſays, that if it was abſolutely hurtful to mankind, it would be ſo for all men, and yet many eat heartily of it, and are in good health. If, therefore, cheeſe, which is ſo hard of digeſtion, and ſo full of earthy particles, even when eaten to exceſs is good nouriſhment to ſome perſons, how can we ſay that any thing is abſolutely bad for all.

Pliny ſays, that thruſhes and kids eat poiſonous herbs. What kills other animals fattens them. But you will reply, that amongſt different animals there is a total different conſtitution of body, which I will grant. It is enough for me to know that there is great difference between the particulars of the human ſpecies. Schenkius, in his obſervations, tells us of a man who could take an ounce of jalap without being purged at all, while other authors aſſure us, that ſome experience the ſame effect from only ſmelling roſes. Is not this a very remarkable difference in conſtitutions ?

True it is that commonly there is not ſo great a diſſimilitude between men, but there is always ſome, and that very ſenſible. As there is not one face perfectly like that of another, ſo there are not two conſtitutions that intirely agree together. We obſerve a great diſparity

in all men in thoſe accidents which are ſubject to our ſenſes. What can be more ſimple than the ſound of a voice? and yet, there is hardly a man whoſe tone of it reſembles that of another. In a community, like ours, we ſoon learn to diſtinguiſh every perſon when they ſpeak, without ſeeing them. If this happens with regard to our voice, how many different combinations muſt there be in our conſtitution, which is variable in ſo many different ways?

If our ſenſes had more power, we ſhould find men different even in the things where they ſeem to reſemble each other. Brutes give us this piece of knowledge. We cannot diſtinguiſh by our ſmell the effluvia of the human body, or even, if we perceive it, we cannot diſcern one man from another. But the dog will diſtinguiſh all men by their ſmell. What a great diſtance will he follow his maſter without ſeeing him! and where various paths meet his ſcent will find out the effluvia which ariſes from his maſter, and he will follow him, though others have croſſed the ſame road. He will even pick up a ſtone thrown by his maſter's hand amidſt many others thrown at the ſame time by different perſons, that ſhort touch of the fleſh being ſufficient to mark it from all

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the reſt. This is ſufficient to prove the difference of conſtitutions, as without it there could not be ſuch a variety in the effluvia.

CHAP. II.

BUT it is not only from the contrariety of temperament that men are incapable of judging what nouriſhment is moſt proper for others, but alſo from the difference there is between food itſelf of the ſame kind. All wine, for example, is of the ſame ſpecies, yet, ſome is ſweet, ſome ſour, and ſome rough, and the ſmell is as different as the taſte; ſome is of a lighter quality, and ſome more ſubſtantial. There is the very ſame difference in all meats, as alſo in all plants, though we cannot perceive it ſo eaſily from the imperfection of our ſenſes. From hence it may, and does actually happen, that one kind of wine may agree with a perſon and not another; that ſheep nouriſhed with certain herbs may be good food for him, and hurtful to his conſtitution, if fed with others.

To this we may add, that the ſame nouriſhment, without the leaſt difference, may be uſeful at one time, and hurtful at another, to the ſame perſon. This may happen either from the different ſeaſons of the year; the different temperature of the air; the different climate to which he has travelled, or the difference of his own age. Hippocrates produces all theſe cauſes in his third book concerning diet, where, though he only ſpeaks of the impoſſibility of adapting the quantity of our food to that of our exerciſe; yet his reaſons abſolutely demonſtrate, that it is impoſſible to determine the quantity and quality of nouriſhment for any particular perſon. His words are as follow: "It is impoſſible to write any thing exact con- "cerning diet, or meaſure the quantity of "nouriſhment to the exerciſe we take. Many "are the difficulties which lie in our way. "Firſt, the different conſtitutions of all men. "Next, the difference of their ages, which require "to be treated in various manners. Beſides, the "different ſituation of countries; the changes "of the winds and weather; and the ſeaſons of "the year. There is alſo much difference be- "tween the ſame kind of food, wheat is differ- "ent from wheat, and wine from wine.

If we reflect upon this paſſage of Hippocrates, and upon what I have before ſaid, we ſhall find that eſtabliſhed maxim very doubtful, if not falſe, that, to preſerve our health we ought always to eat of the ſame kind of food. The famous Bacon is of a different opinion, and he tells us that we ought to vary both our remedies and nouriſhment. Hiſt. Natur. cent. 1. num. 69. Reaſon alſo perſuades the ſame, for if our bodies are not always in the ſame habit, it will be improper to nouriſh them always in the ſame manner. If ſome times we abound with alkaline, and at others with acid ſalts, our nouriſhment muſt reſpectively incline more to the contraries, to correct the exceſs of the former.

If alſo, from the different ſeaſons of the year, or from the ſituation we dwell in, or from the intemperance of the weather, we find it too moiſt or dry, too cold or hot, we muſt neceſſarily change the quality of our food, ſeeking in what we eat or drink the qualities contrary to thoſe which ſuperabound in our bodies. This is only ſpeaking theoretically. In practice it is very difficult or impoſſible to aſcertain what are the predominant qualities, either in our bodies, or in the food we eat; and ſtill more ſo,

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what are the different degrees of them. The Phyſicians even differ about them in the bodies of their patients when they are more clear from the force of the diſorder, and one Doctor will attribute a diſeaſe to acids, while the other lays the cauſe upon alkalines; and one will ſay it is owing to cold, while the other declares, it proceeds from heat. In practice therefore we can have no other rule, but obſerving by experience what it is that hurts or does us good; and what it is our ſtomach can digeſt with facility or the contrary.

CHAP. III.

EVEN if one kind of nouriſhment was proper for all men, and at all times, we could never know, from medical books upon diet, what this precious food is, their precepts are ſo contrary to each other. The preference is generally given to meat, as being more analagous to our bodies, than fiſh, herbs, or fruit. However, very weighty authors are not wanting, who aſſert, that meat is not only an enemy

to

to our ſouls, but to our bodies. Plutarch, in his book of preſerving health, ſays, "that the "eating of fleſh engenders crudities, and leaves "malignant humours in the body, and that "it would be better if we eat none of it." Pliny, in ſome parts of his works, inclines to the ſame opinion. The famous Phyſician, Sanctorius, altered the common aphoriſm, that all exceſs is bad, but that of bread the worſt, by ſubſtituting meat inſtead of bread. Galen declares himſelf highly in favour of fiſh, and approves it as food of very good nutriment, and equal to that of mountain birds. See Paul Zaquias, in his medical queſtions, lib. 5. tit. 1. quæſt. 2. where he joins all the authorities of Hippocrates to thoſe of Galen, and of other illuſtrious Phyſicians, who have been of the ſame way of thinking. Doctor Lewis Lemery, regent to the medical faculty at Paris, in his treatiſe concerning diet, ſeems to eſteem principally all kinds of plants, in conſideration, that Anchorets, who lived only upon herbs and fruits, have been more robuſt, and of a longer life than other men. In fact, he declares that this kind of food is moſt eaſy of digeſtion, and produces moſt temperate humours. Some attribute to the uſe of this nutriment, the length of time the antient Chriſtians lived in the woods.

Ballivio

Ballivio obſerves, that meat does harm to many ſick perſons, and that they grow better by living upon herbs and fiſh. "You will ob-
"ſerve, ſays he, in practice, that ſome patients
"who are troubled with fluxions and chronical
"diſorders, get well during Lent, and again
"relapſe at Eaſter, upon account of returning
"to meat. You will find many diſorders cured
"by greens, herbs, and fiſh, which become
"more violent by eating food of better nou-
"riſhment. de morbor. ſucceſs. cap. 9." Etmuler, treating of fevers in general, condemns the eating of meat as noxious to perſons who labour under thoſe diſorders. "As meat, ſays
"he, is diſagreeable to them, ſo is it alſo un-
"wholeſome."

Finally, in theſe times a great party has been formed in favour of fiſh, herbs, and fruit, to the excluſion of meat, upon account of the new or revived ſyſtem of the tituration of food in our ſtomachs. This opinion being renewed in our times from the ancient Phyſician, Eraſiſtratus, and that our food is reduced to chyle, not by concoction, as ſome thought, nor by fermentation, as others pretended; but by the action of the muſcles and fibres, which beat, pound, and titurate, as in a mortar, what we have in our ſtomach,

ſtomach, till it is reduced to a paſte or cream. Mr Hecquet, a Phyſician of Paris, with other defenders of this ſyſtem, deduce, in conſequence, that as meat is more difficult to be thus perfectly reduced, upon account of the firm texture of its parts, than fiſh, herbs, and fruit, it is better to eat the latter, as of more eaſy digeſtion than fleſh. Indeed, this reaſon ſeems to be but of little force; for the eaſy diſſolution of food in the ſtomach is not ſufficient to determine the goodneſs of it, as we muſt likewiſe take into conſideration the kind of nutriture it gives to the body, which may not be ſo wholeſome, though more eaſy of digeſtion. This, however, does not take away from the probability which theſe authors give to their opinion, and when united with the others we have mentioned, the caſe ſeems very doubtful what kind of nouriſhment is the beſt.

So far are we from having any fixed rule upon this ſubject, that thoſe very things which are generally eſteemed as moſt unwholeſome have learned authors who ſpeak much in their favour. Bacon produces, as food proper to lengthen life, beef, veniſon, and kid; and among fiſh, thoſe that are ſalted and dry. He likewiſe commends old cheeſe. With regard

to bread, he prefers that made with oats, barley, and millet, to wheaten bread, and, in the laſt, he prefers that mixed with the bran to what is pure. In Hiſt. Vit. and Mort. fol. mihi. 540. His reaſon is, that they give nouriſhment that is not ſo eaſily to be diſſipated. If Bacon alone favoured this idea, his authority would give it weight; as he was the moſt exact and conſtant obſerver of nature we have had. Herman Boerhaave, a famous Phyſician, who now reſides at Leyden, for the ſame end of prolonging life, prefers dry and ſalted meat, as alſo ſalted and old fiſh, in general, every thing that is dry, hard, and tenacious. He grounds this upon the ſame principles as Bacon, and ſays, they reſiſt more to diſſipation and putrefaction. De Diæta ad Longœvitatem. num. 1057.

But the greateſt miſtake that Phyſicians ſuffer in this matter, and the moſt common they fall under, is to preſcribe to their patients that food which agrees beſt with themſelves, as if their own ſtomachs were to give law to thoſe of other perſons. He who loves wine would render all thoſe whom he attends drunkards. On the contrary, he who drinks only water, recommends nothing but that element to thoſe whom he viſits. Mr. Duncan, a Phyſician of Montpellier,

pellier, ſays, you may know what the Doctor loves, from what he preſcribes. He relates a a ſtory of two famous Phyſicians in France, one of whom always recommended coffee to his patients, which the other forbad them to drink in the moſt rigorous manner.

What party are we to follow in this great oppoſition of opinions? Let us follow none, but each attend to his own experience. Let us obſerve with care what it is ſits well upon our ſtomachs, and what is digeſted without difficulty, in which we muſt attend to the digeſtion not being too quick, as in ſome aliments, from their reſemblance to chyle, the quickneſs of their reduction may give ſome doubt of their corrupting. Let us, therefore, obſerve, that they bring no diſagreable change in our bodies, in any of the qualities that are ſubject to our ſenſes.

CHAP. IV.

BESIDES the knowledge which experience gives, our taſte and ſmell are generally faithful explorers of the uſefulneſs or im-

propriety of what we take; as Francis Bayle ſays, in his philoſophical courſe, theſe two porters of the manſion of the ſoul rarely deceive us in the information they give of the amity or hoſtility of the gueſt who demands admittance. I agree with Father Malbranche, that we had better govern ourſelves by our own ſenſes, in the preſervation of our health, than by all the laws of phyſic. (de inquir. verit. in concl. trium. prim. lib.) The taſte, particularly, has been appointed by nature for this end. Etmuler, with the greateſt generality, aſſures us, (Inſt. Medic. 1. part. cap. 3.) that we always digeſt well what we deſire with eagerneſs, even though the deſire ariſes from a diſorder. He ſays, that women who ſuffer that depraved appetite, called the green ſickneſs, can without inconvenience digeſt earth, chalk, and aſhes, merely becauſe they ſo eagerly deſire them; notwithſtanding the ſubſtances are ſo contrary to our nature. A ſtrong deſire, therefore, is a ſign that the ſtomach has within it ſome ferment proper to diſſolve the matter for which it ſo eagerly wiſhes. We have ſeen the ſame author ſay above, that meat was hurtful in fevers, merely becauſe it was diſagreeable to the palate of the patients.

How-

However, I cannot approve this rule, taken in ſo very great generality, and without any exceptions. If our deſires ariſe from the cauſe of a diſorder, what we take may be eaſily digeſted, and ſtill be noxious; for, as the cauſe of our deſire is preternatural, the food which agrees with it may not be natural to our bodies. Secondly, we ought always to be cautious of food of a high taſte; as what is extremely ſour, rough, biting, ſweet, &c. till experience has fully proved that it does us no harm. Thoſe alſo that exceed very much in the two qualities of heat and cold ought to be uſed with caution, except in particular conſtitutions, which may demand the aſſiſtance of either of the two extremes. However, I believe there are no habits of body which can always require nouriſhment of this kind, and therefore, Hippocrates abſolutely condemns them as contrary to our nature. We ought, thirdly, to obſerve whether the deſire does not ariſe from a bad cuſtom, as then what we wiſh for may be hurtful. This happens with drunkards, though wine undoubtedly does not do them ſo much harm as it would to perſons who are not acuſtomed to it. If, as we grow older, we ſtill deſire a greater quantity of the food that pleaſes us, we may hold it as a general rule that, in this

this caſe we ought not to truſt or follow our appetite. I omit the phyſical reaſons for theſe exceptions, not to be too long, and becauſe experience, which outweighs every thing that can be ſaid, authoriſes them.

It is my opinion, therefore, that under theſe regulations, we may and ought to follow the will of our appetite in the choice of what we eat and drink. Certain it is, that nature has made a union between our palate and our ſtomach, conſonant to the habit of our bodies, and that, what is agreeable to the one, will be amicable to the other. The Almighty has given us ſenſes to be as watchmen for our preſervation, and that of taſte alone will inform us what is conformable to our preſent conſtitution or otherwiſe. Experience ſhews, that the the ſtomach never embraces with affection what the palate receives with diſguſt. If, however, this maxim ſhould ſeem too general to any of my readers, let them follow that of Hippocrates, which is not very different, and who ſays, in his aphoriſms, that we ought to prefer that food and drink which is moſt agreeable, though of a leſs wholeſome quality, to what would ſeem better, but is more diſpleaſing to us. Sect. 2. Aphoriſm 38. If any perſon receives

ceives harm from following this rule, I will confeſs myſelf guilty of it in his preſence.

But in all caſes, either when you are well or indiſpoſed, never force into your ſtomach what you have an abſolute repugnance to. Many Phyſicians fail in this, and almoſt all thoſe who aſſiſt ſick perſons, and eſpecially if they are women, whoſe compaſſionate diſpoſition makes them quite obſtinate upon this head, thinking they do much good to the patient by ſending into his ſtomach a diſagreeable gueſt.

CHAP. V.

WITH regard to changing or not changing our nouriſhment, I cannot approve the extremes either way, though both have their defenders. The rule of Celſus to accuſtom yourſelf to eat like the generality of people, lib. 1. cap. 1. ſeems to me very reaſonable, except there is ſome contrary habit formed. It is a part of good education, though many rich perſons fail in it, to make their children from time to time eat of every thing; that if

if by the loſs of their fortune, or their ſituation in life, or going into foreign countries, and other accidents, they are obliged to uſe different nouriſhment from that with which they were brought up, they may not ſuffer from the change of body occaſioned by ſo great a novelty. In old people, however, it is dangerous to alter the food which they have uſed all their lives, even though the change is made by degrees. A middle aged perſon, however, ought to vary his diet whenever it becomes diſagreeable to him, and ſometimes even though it does not, to avoid thoſe inconveniences which ariſe from the being ſcrupulouſly tied down to the ſame kind of food.

Very little harm can reſult from perſons of ſtrong conſtitutions eating or drinking now and then of high taſted things, ſo they correct the exceſs by ſomething contrary. For example, if you eat or drink what is of a very hot nature, you will counterbalance it by cool things in the next meal, and the contrary. Nature herſelf calls out for this by the voice of appetite. He who has drunk too much wine the preceding evening, will eagerly deſire water to qualify it? He who has eat an unuſual quantity of fruit or ſalad, will, in a few hours, be told by his appetite,

tite that he muſt drink a glaſs of generous wine, or ſomething of a hot nature.

CHAP. VI.

WE have hitherto been treating of the quality of what we eat and drink. We muſt now treat a little of the quantity. There is a very common error introduced upon this ſubject, which is, that we can hardly eat too little. Both learned and unlearned join in crying out, that the more we confine the quantity within the rules of poſſibility, the better it is for our healths: and many underſtand nothing elſe by the word diet, than reducing our nouriſhment as much as we can. The noble Venetian, Lewis Cornaro, being troubled in his youth by various diſorders, reduced himſelf to the narrow allowance of only eating twelve ounces weight, and drinking fourteen every day. By theſe means he not only perfectly recovered from all his infirmities, but lived to more than one hundred years. When he was very old he wrote a book, in which he perſuades all perſons to lead a ſober life from his example; and though his work reduced but few to

ſuch auſterity, it made almoſt all believe that his rules were neceſſary for lengthening our life and preſerving our health. But this conſequence is deduced without any reaſon; for God did not create Lewis Cornaro to be a rule for all mankind in what they eat or drink, nor is there any perſon in the world who can poſſibly be ſuch. The learned Jeſuit, Leonard Leſio, who tranſlated the treatiſe of Cornaro from Italian into Latin, was ſo ſtrongly perſuaded by it that he bound himſelf under the ſame reſtrictions. He, however, lived only to the age of ſeventy-nine, and that with many diſorders which he laboured under. To one man, like Cornaro, who lived an hundred years with ſuch ſtrict diet, we may oppoſe a large number of others, who have lived much longer without all theſe ſcruples. His conſtitution required ſuch abſtinence, which few others might be able to bear. Nor is it abſolutely certain that he owed the cure of his diſorders to his diet, as Nature herſelf might have carried them off, as there are many which belong only to youth, and ſubſide as we grow older. Cornara himſelf renders this probable when he confeſſes that he was of a fiery temper, and much addicted to anger.—As his indiſpoſitions might ariſe from this cauſe, it is more natural that the fire decreaſed through age, than his ſtreight diet, which all Phyſicians

ſay

ſay is not proper for thoſe of a bilious habit of body.

Hippocrates, ſo far from approving great abſtinence, ſays, it is hurtful, in his Book of Ancient Medicine. He tells us, that the defect of food does us no leſs harm than the exceſs of it. Hunger, continues that author, has great power upon the human frame, either in curing its diſorders, or weakening and deſtroying it. The evils which ariſe from too great abſtinence are different, but not leſs ſerious than thoſe which ariſe from too great repletion. In his aphoriſms he is not content with what he here lays down, but ſays, the defect of food is more dangerous than the exceſs, even with reſpect to perſons who are indiſpoſed. Theſe are his words :— "We commit a greater error in too rigorous a "diet, than in exceeding ſomething more than "we ought. This makes abſtinence even dan- "gerous to perſons in health ; for, as it weak- "ens their ſtrength, they cannot reſiſt the at- "tacks that may happen to them. Therefore the "confining yourſelf to a very ſtreight diet "is more dangerous than paſſing a little the "bounds of what is neceſſary."—Sect. 1. No. 5. That the eating too little is hurtful, as well as eating too much, is likewiſe proved by the reaſon which Hippocrates gives in ano-

ther place. "Neither exceſs, ſays he, nor hun-
"ger, nor any thing elſe that paſſes the bounds
"of nature, can be good to man."—Sect. 2. Aphor. 4. Certain it is, that every thing violent is an enemy to nature; and it is as certain that hunger and thirſt are a violence to her. If they produce no other harm, the pain and affliction of ſpirit which they occaſion would be ſufficient. None of us are ignorant how much ſerenity and quiet of mind are neceſſary to preſerve health, and how much pain and anxiety deſtroy it, in proportion to its oppreſſion. How much detriment muſt it cauſe our health, to be every day fighting with our appetite? To let our imagination carry us to purling ſtreams, while our palate is ſighing for a little moiſture? To leave the coats of our ſtomach a prey to an acrimonious humour, the voracity of which Nature intended ſhould be employed upon our food?

CHAP. VII.

ARE we then to eat and drink juſt as much as we pleaſe? No, certainly, there ought to be ſome little reſtraint upon the appetite.

tite. The rule of Galen, to get up from table with ſtill a little deſire for eating, ſeems entirely agreeable to reaſon. There ought to be ſome little room left in the ſtomach, and ſome little appetite yet remaining, not enough to give us any pain or inconveniency, but ſufficient to leave free the operations of our body and of our mind. This is the true ſignal that we have committed no exceſs. He who after his meals feels the uſe of his limbs, faculties, and ſenſes, equally unembarraſſed as before he ſat down to table, can never have paſſed the bounds of what is right. But the contrary may be ſaid of him who feels any of his faculties benumbed.

Celſus, however, is more complaiſant, as he preſcribes at times that we ſhould exceed a little in our diet, and always that we ſhould make the ſtomach digeſt as much as it can.—He adviſes us to eat ſometimes much and ſometimes little, but divide our nouriſhment into two meals a-day, when we ought always to eat as much as we can, ſo the ſtomach does but digeſt it.—Lib. 1. chap. 1. But the rule of eating as much as we can, ſeems to me doubtful. The ſtretching any power to its utmoſt extent, weakens it. If the ſtomach is every day obliged to do as much as it can, it will

every

every day be able to do leſs. A wiſe traveller will never force his horſe to perform as much as he can in one day, upon a long journey.—Beſides, it is difficult to know how far the powers of the ſtomach extend; and it is, therefore, more ſecure to hold a little the reins of it. Had the ſtate of innocence continued, the rule of our appetite would have been exactly juſt, as it never would have exceeded the bounds of reaſon: But things are now entirely changed, and prudence muſt, therefore, aſſign ſome limitations to it.

Thoſe who adviſe us now-and-then to exceed a little, ſeem to me to have reaſon on their ſide, not to tie down the body always to the ſame rule; but then, in our ſucceeding meals, we muſt retrench what we have exceeded. In all caſes, we ought never to proceed to a freſh repletion, 'till our ſtomach is entirely eaſed from our former, and our appetite ſufficiently raiſed. When we are going to uſe any great exerciſe, or think that from travelling, or any other cauſe, we ſhall be diſappointed in the ſucceeding meal, at the hour we uſed to take it, there can be no harm in fortifying the ſtomach, by giving it more nouriſhment than ordinary.—Exerciſe and bodily labour is to be greatly regarded,

garded, as it demands more food, by its diſſipating ſo much.

The rules that I have given muſt be underſtood concerning perſons of a ſtrong conſtitution; but thoſe who abound in excrementary humours as thoſe of ſaliva or phlegm, ought to hold the reins ſtreighter upon their appetite.—True it is, that they generally eat little; and, therefore, taking away a little from that, according to the rule which we gave of Galen, their nouriſhment will remain in proportion to their vicious habit of body. However, ſome of theſe are a little inclined to gluttony, which perhaps is derived from their very diſorders, as it deſtroys the harmony which Nature has placed between the voice of our appetite, and the food which is neceſſary for us. In this caſe, they ought to be very ſparing, and ſuffer actual hunger and thirſt, which penance, however, will not laſt long, as abſtinence will conſume thoſe humours which irritated the appetite.

With regard to the dividing our meals between dinner and ſupper, Phyſicians diſpute concerning which is the moſt wholeſome.—Some ſay we ſhould eat moſt at dinner, and others moſt at ſupper. Both parties have their reaſons. The firſt, however, ſeems to be the moſt

agreeable

agreeable to common uſage. My rule is, that every perſon ſhould follow what agrees with him beſt, as the moſt ſecure method. Indeed, with regard to eating and drinking, let our own experience be our guide in every thing, as we ought never to loſe ſight of it.

CHAP. VIII.

WHAT we have ſaid here with regard to diet, is to be underſtood of all other things elſe which can form a regimen of life, as ſleep, exerciſe, air, &c. In all it is an error to follow the opinion of the Phyſician, againſt our own experience. Our exerciſe ought to be moderate; but we can only judge of this moderation by our own ſtrength and the nouriſhment we take. If we exceed in our food, ſo much we ought to exceed in our exerciſe. He who can uſe but little exerciſe, from his employments or profeſſion, ought to make uſe of ſome of a violent nature, that the intenſeneſs of it may make up for the ſhortneſs of its duration.

It is difficult in ſleep to commit any exceſs. Nature, delivered to herſelf, will preſcribe the time

time proper for every perſon. With regard to ſleeping after dinner, many Phyſicians are againſt it, and ſay it produces colds and fluxions. But I have ſeen many perſons in perfect good health, who have always ſlept an hour or two in the afternoon. Moſt of the religious orders follow this practice, and I do not ſee they are in worſe health than laymen. Often when I travelled in the ſummer time, and got up early to avoid the heat of the ſun, I have ſlept two or three hours after dinner, without perceiving the leaſt hurt. Many will tell me, they always feel a head-ach by doing it; but our experience deceives us in this point, as in many others, by taking for the cauſe what is only the effect. The head-ach does not ariſe from ſleeping too much, but the ſleeping too much ariſes from the head ach.— The heavy weight of vapours upon the fibres of the brain cauſes a deep ſleep, and the oppreſſion continues after we are awake, 'till the head becomes clear by little and little. This is proved from our heads not aching by ſleeping after dinner, to make up ſome deficiency in our nocturnal repoſe, which if it cauſed that diſorder upon account of the time, would undoubtedly produce it in the preſent caſe. Secondly, when we have much inclination to ſleep in the middle of the day, even if we reſiſt it, we ſhall

ſtill ſuffer the head-ach, as I have many times experienced.

CHAP. IX.

THE air which we breath, or the country we inhabit, has much influence to the detriment or advantage of our health. The knowledge we gain alſo, in this reſpect, is obtained by experience, for the phyſical rules, which are generally given, are very uncertain. Almoſt all condemn moiſt countries as unwholeſome, but they are deceived. The whole principality of Aſturias is very moiſt, and yet people live longer there than in Caſtile, and not only upon the mountains but in the valleys. All iſlands are more humid than the continent, as the ſea loads their atmoſphere with vapours on all ſides. Notwithſtanding this, Bacon obſerves, that iſlanders generally live longer than the inhabitants of dryer regions. Thoſe who dwell in the Orcades, (iſlands to the north of Scotland) though very intemperate, and ignorant of any remedies, live longer than the Ruſſians

ſians who are placed in the ſame latitude. In the Canary and Azores iſlands, men live longer than in that part of Africa which is under the ſame parallel. The ſame in Japan, in compariſon with China, though the latter have applied with much induſtry to phyſic. There is no province, either in America or Africa, where ſo much health is enjoyed as in the delicious iſland of Ceylon. It is ſaid that countries abounding in timber are unwholeſome, but the iſland of Ceylon is almoſt covered with foreſts.

From hence we may collect, that neither the dryneſs of a country, nor the apparent purity of its air, can be a total ſecurity to us of the goodneſs of the climate. The temperature of that of Madrid is commended throughout all Spain, and the fineneſs of its atmoſphere diſſipates all bad ſmells—Even the dogs and cats thrown in the ſtreets dry up without moleſting the paſſenger But Bayle, in his Philoſophical Lectures, tom 1. fol. mihi 502, infers from hence, that the climate of Madrid is bad, attributing this effect to the many volatile ſharp or alkaline ſalts, which impregnate the air, and cauſe too great a thinneſs of blood, and thoſe other diſorders which are ſuffered by the

inhabitants. He adds, that the cuſtom of leaving animals unburied about the town, though thought to be wholeſome by our phyſicians, as thickening the air by their effluvia, yet in reality is hurtful, as increaſing the ſaline particles with which it is pregnant. Be this philoſophy true or not, for all philoſophize as they pleaſe, the fact is, that in Madrid people do not live ſo long as in countries where the air is much leſs pure. The population of that city is little leſs in number than that of the whole principality of Aſturias. It is, however, a certain fact, that you will find twice the number of perſons of 80, 90, and 100 years old in the Aſturias, than in Madrid. It is, therefore, undoubted, that the apparent purity of the air does not prove the wholeſomeneſs of the climate. I ſay the apparent purity of the air, which conſiſts in its being free from vapours, or other ſenſible exhalations, as the atmoſphere may be corrupted by other inſenſible corpuſcles, notwithſtanding the ſky ever appears ſerene to the higheſt degree. This is often obſerved in epidemical diſorders, which depend, without doubt, upon the infection of the air. While the plague reigns in a country for years, eſpecially in thoſe which are under a ſerene climate, many are the days which muſt be without

without a cloud, and yet the infection ſtill continues, and commonly moſt in ſummer, when the heavens are moſt tranſparent.

Sydenham obſerved many epidemical years without the leaſt difference in the air, as far as our ſenſes could judge. He likewiſe obſerved ſome years, which entirely reſembled thoſe in which epidemical diſorders prevailed, without his being able to fix any rule why they raged or not. This celebrated Phyſician, therefore, in many parts of his work tells us, that the wholeſomeneſs of ſeaſons does not in the leaſt depend upon any qualities that are ſubject to our ſenſes. Speaking of the plague at London, in the years 1665 and 1666, he declares, that it is impoſſible to know the quality and intemperature of the air which rendered it ſo unwholeſome, and laughs at the arrogance of thoſe, who preſume to find phyſical reaſons for this and many other natural effects.

From hence we may infer, that experience alone can ſhew what country is wholeſome, and what otherwiſe. The ſame happens with regard to climate as to food, that there is hardly any ſo good as to agree with every perſon, or any ſo bad that no one can thrive in it. The ſame

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may alſo be ſaid of the choice of ſituations in the ſame country, or apartments in the ſame houſe, though I do not deny that, in general, ſtanding waters, and marſhy grounds, full of vapours, are noxious. Obſervation has proved to me, that there is great difference between that humidity which reeks but of the earth, or what is brought to us in miſts or clouds from ſome diſtance. The firſt is generally unwholeſome; the ſecond we ſee is not ſo in many places. Perhaps the agitation of the air purifies the vapour, and makes it quit thoſe corpuſcles which render it infectious.

Miſty weather does not in all countries affect our heads. Where it has this power, I am perſuaded, it does not ariſe from the fog itſelf, but from ſome ſubtle malignant particles mixed with it. What ſeems to me a proof of this, is, that though you ſhut your doors and windows, ſo that no moiſture can enter the room, you feel as great an oppreſſion as if you were expoſed to the air, which I have experienced many times. The ſame may be ſaid of thoſe winds which trouble ſome countries, as the South and Eaſt wind, for we perceive the ſame indiſpoſition, though ſhut up in a room, as if we were walking in a deſert. This makes

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me think that the harm is cauſed by ſome particles, perhaps, of a mineral nature, mixed with the air, whoſe extreme ſubtlety defies all precautions to exclude them.

CHAP. X.

I SHALL conclude this eſſay with ſome general obſervations, which contradict certain vulgar miſtakes in regulating ourſelves, but which are ſo ſtrongly introduced, that we may call them popular errors.

Some adapt their way of life to that of a perſon, who, regulating himſelf in a particular manner, lived a long time with uninterrupted health. But this is a miſtake.—Firſt, becauſe we have already proved, that what is good for one may be noxious to another. Secondly, becauſe, in whatever manner we regulate our conduct, ſome will live more and others leſs. Many have lived to a great age without taſting wine all their lives, and others without almoſt taſting water.—Some by eating the ſame food with

with great temperance; others though they have eat of every thing without reſtriction. Some making uſe of hot, and others of cooling things. The deceaſed Marquis of Mancera lived almoſt all his life upon chocolate, and did not even leave it off during a fever—yet he arrived at the age of 108 years. If others ſhould follow his example, they might kill themſelves before they were forty, at leaſt there are few people with whom this mode of life would agree.

Our practice in placing beds in the moſt retired part of a room, that they may be defended from the wind, is wrong, if precaution be not taken that they may, from time to time, be ventilated. Stagnant air is as noxious as ſtagnant water. This may be known from the bad ſmell which it exhales, whenever we open any magazine or chamber that has been long ſhut up. The plague, which deſolated the army of antient Gauls, was occaſioned from their opening a large cheſt at the Temple of Delphos, which had been locked up from time immemorial, and where they thought to find great riches. The Gentiles attributed this ſcourge to the vengeance of Apollo, againſt the violators of his temple. But reaſon perſuades us, that air con-

confined for ages without the leaſt vent might acquire a high degree of putrefaction, capable of affecting all the atmoſphere around with its malignant effluvia. We may, perhaps, attribute to the ſame cauſe the ſudden deaths of ſome miners, when they break open any hollow in the bowels of the earth, rather than to the vapours of arſenic, of which mineral no traces have been found in ſome parts where theſe misfortunes have happened. Air, therefore, confined in a chamber muſt be unwholſome, and ſtill more ſo, from having imbibed the effluvia which evaporate from our bodies. Every place, therefore, where there is a bed ought to have two oppoſite windows, to be opened when the weather is fine, though, afterwards, they may be ſhut as cloſe as you pleaſe.

It is reckoned neat to put the bed in order as ſoon as you have got out of it, but on the contrary, the cloaths ought to be thrown open, and the ſheets expoſed to the air, that any noxious vapours may be exhaled, before they are condenſed by the cold.

We are all perſuaded of the uſefulneſs there is in being cleanly in our dreſs, eſpecially in our linen, which is in immediate contact with

our body, and the barbarous practice of keeping on the ſame ſhirt in a diſorder is now totally baniſhed. A precaution is however taken in this caſe, which, though eſteemed good, is noxious. We give the ſhirt to another perſon to put on till all moiſture is dried out of it, as thinking the human heat better adapted to a ſick man than what the ſun or fire can communicate. I muſt confeſs, this is a very particular doctrine. In good philoſophy heat can have no eſſential difference, and will always produce the ſame effects in proportion to its intenſeneſs. The warmth of the ſun or the fire muſt have juſt the ſame force as that of the human body. Any particular virtue attributed to the native heat of living perſons muſt depend entirely upon the concurrence of other different circumſtances; and thoſe who ſay that our food is digeſted by the natural heat of the ſtomach muſt mean ſomething more than mere warmth. Even though the heat of the ſtomach could perform this operation by itſelf alone, it does not from thence follow, it is diſferent from that of the ſun, or of fire; the reaſon is, that it can only perform the diſſolution by exciting a fermentation, which is common to all. Even in inanimate ſubſtances, warmth promotes fermentation, as by the uſe of it we

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can ripen fruits before their time, and ſupply by art the deficiency of the ſun. As, therefore, all heat is the ſame, it can be of no uſe to the ſick perſon that the ſhirt ſhould be warmed by being put on the back of another. On the contrary, ſome damage may be cauſed by its having imbibed a ſmall quantity of the excrementitial exhalations of another body. It will, therefore, be better to air the linen at the fire or the ſun, giving it that degree of heat which the human body has in its natural ſtate.

Some uſe the ſame quantity of clothes all the year round, both upon their beds and about their perſons. But this is wrong, for we ought to lighten or increaſe our cloathing according to the degrees of heat and cold. The quantity of covering which ſhelters us in winter ſtifles us in ſummer. Bacon ſays that too much cloathing weakens the body, in Hiſt. Vitæ & Mortis. When the heat of ſummer relaxes our bodies, why are we to increaſe our ſufferings by loading ourſelves with cloaths. True it is, the Caſtilian proverb ſays, " if you wiſh " to live well in health, wear the ſame cloaths " both winter and ſummer:" but I never was of opinion that proverbs were undoubted truths, and a writer againſt common errors

ought not to give ear to them. However, for perſons who venerate theſe ſayings, I will add a new interpretation of that which I have mentioned, and which I made uſe of to my maſter, during my noviciate, when he accuſed me of being too lightly dreſſed in a hot ſummer's day. I told him that the proverb was entirely on my ſide, as it meant that we ſhould be more coolly cloathed in ſummer then in winter. Upon his aſking me how that could poſſibly be, I told him that the cloaths which we had worn all winter, muſt be neceſſarily wore threadbare and lighter than they were at the beginning of it; which I thought the true ſenſe of wearing the ſame cloaths. Nor is it of any force to me that many perſons have been in perfect health that have ſweltered themſelves with covering during the whole ſummer. Theſe men, who go on in the ſame method without regarding climates or ſeaſons, are generally of a conſtitution made of braſs, to which iron rules may correſpond. Any manner of life they follow they will always be in health, for their native ſtrength bears down any impediment. As perſons of this robuſt conſtitution are generally not the moſt addicted to reflection, no man would be able to perſuade them to try whether they would not be in ſtill

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better health by a contrary proceeding. However, I cannot blame them if they receive no inconvenience from the practice which they follow, though I doubt they muſt ſuffer a little from the ſummer's ſun ſtriking upon their full cloathing. What I have here ſaid ought to be underſtood with ſome reſtriction in thoſe countries where the climate is extremely changeable, or where any high mountain raiſes ſudden ſtorms in the midſt of ſummer.

It is reckoned extremely unwholeſome to have your chamber window open during the extreme heats of ſummer nights. I have often done it, as well as many others, without experiencing the leaſt detriment, though the weather was exceſſively ſultry. This, however, cannot be done in the climates we have juſt ſpoken of, and which are ſubject to ſudden colds, without the window ſhould be ſheltered from that part where the mountain or other cauſe of theſe great changes are ſituated. In the towns where they throw all their excrements into the ſtreet it will alſo be proper to keep the windows ſhut.

The water which we drink is a very principal conſideration in the government of our health.

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The common probable ſigns of good water are, that it ſhould want all kinds of taſte; that it ſhould be clear as chryſtal, and light; that it ſhould be quickly heated and cooled, and boil expeditiouſly whatever it is applied to. But that the ſprings ſhould riſe towards the eaſt, is a vulgar error that is often falſified. The city of Oviedo, from whence I write this, is full of fountains, but the three beſt of them riſe from the weſt. If we conſult our own reaſon we ſhall ſoon find there can be no reliance upon this mark.

The weighing of water can be of no uſe to ſhew that it is good. That which is heavieſt in the balance may be lighteſt upon the ſtomach, upon account of the greater diſſolubility of its parts, which adapts it better to paſs through the bowels. The lightneſs may, alſo, depend upon a quantity of air being mixed with it, in which caſe it will certainly not be the more wholeſome. The lighteſt food is not always the moſt eaſy of digeſtion; fat is certainly not ſo heavy as meat, and yet we ſee it lies heavier upon the ſtomach. It will be better, therefore, to judge of the lightneſs of the water by its effects than by the ſcales.

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Some experiments I have made have confirmed me in this doctrine.

Another common error I have met with, is, that water or any other liquor which has been artificially frozen, is hurtful to drink when it is diſſolved again. They ſay it is dead, but I do not know what is meant by this expreſſion: If by dead they mean corrupted, they are in the wrong; the corruption of any liquor is eaſily perceiveable, but water that has been frozen ſuffers no change, except, perhaps, a little taſte from the veſſel, which it would have got if it had ſtood in it without being ſurrounded with ice. If frozen in a glaſs it will neither change its color, taſte, or ſmell. Perhaps this error is derived from obſerving what paſſes in all compounded liquors. But this change will happen after ſome time whether you freeze them or not, upon account of the fermentation of their heterogeneous particles. Try the experiment with a little orgeat, and you will ſee. The water of rivers that have a long courſe muſt be a hundred times cooled in the night, and a hundred times heated by the mid-day ſun, without loſing the leaſt of their wholeſome quality. Even that which has been frozen in winter time, is drunk with the

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ſame effect, after it has been melted, as it was before. Wine in paſſing over high mountains is much cooled, and afterwards equally heated in its paſſage through the valleys, without loſing the leaſt of its qualities. To this argument, ſome of thoſe who paſs for philoſophers have anſwered, only to ſhew their learning in all the jargon of the ſchools. They tell us, that the cold, in the examples I have produced, is natural, but violent when I talk of freezing water with ice or ſnow. But this is ſpeaking without reflection, and, perhaps, without underſtanding what they ſay. If the freezing water with ice or ſnow is violent, the freezing of it in a river by the coldneſs of the atmoſphere muſt be equally ſo, as the agent is the ſame; that is the nitre incorporated in the ſnow, or diſperſed in the air. When wine is carried over high mountains the ſnow which covers the ground is the mediate cauſe of its coolneſs, and the ſurrounding frozen atmoſphere the immediate agent; juſt as in a veſſel, the ſnow cools the parts of it which touch the liquor. Fountains and rivers, which deſcend from high mountains, ſpring in general from melted ſnow, which has penetrated into the entrails of the earth, without our diſtinguiſhing any malignant quality in them when their waters become

become warm in their courſe through the valleys. To ſay that the freezing of one is natural, and the other artificial, is not to the purpoſe; for nothing is artificial but the application of the ſnow, which can have no malignant influence upon the liquor. But even ſuppoſing this coldneſs is a violence offered to the ſtate of the water, the boiling of it is a much greater, and yet it will never corrupt, ſo it is boiled alone. I, in my younger years, have often drunk water which had been frozen, but again melted, without receiving the leaſt detriment.

I ſhall omit other obſervations with regard to regimen, as, to ſay all I could upon the ſubject, I muſt write an entire volume. I conclude, therefore, with again deſiring my readers to be governed by their own experience, in every thing which regards their manner of life. Let them take care, however, to underſtand that experience well; for many derive very falſe concluſions from what they obſerve, and even take what is only an effect for the cauſe, as I ſhewed when I ſpake of ſleeping after dinner; or taking for the cauſe what is neither cauſe nor effect, but, merely an attendant upon ſome particular action: this is the moſt com-

mon error of all. As ſoon as we perceive any diſorder, we immediately lay the blame upon ſomething we have done, or upon ſomething we have eat or drunk, though never ſo trifling. We ought to ſee whether by repeating the ſame action the ſame effect follows; if not, the concurrence will be caſual, and not occaſioned by what we have done. If we give due attention to what I here remark, we have no occaſion to aſk a Phyſican when we are well, though of a weak conſtitution, what or how much we are to eat or drink, or when or in what manner we are to uſe exerciſe, &c. Many are ſo ſuperſtitious that they would upon no account paſs the Doctor's orders, though famiſhing with hunger and dying with thirſt; and there are phyſicians who determine every thing with ſuch exactneſs as if they had weighed the powers of our ſtomach in a balance. A patient was ordered to take a certain number of turns in his room, but forgetting whether it was to be the length or the breadth of it, he ſent for more particular inſtructions to his Doctor's houſe. I am no enemy, however, to general advice, and even ſometimes a little particularized, when a phyſician, by long experience, has gained a perfect knowledge of the food of a country,

country, and of the conſtitution of the patient who conſults him.

Although the common opinion, that application to ſtudy is prejudicial to health, belongs to this eſſay, yet as it is a ſubject that requires a longer diſcuſſion, I ſhall place it apart by itſelf.

ENCOURAGEMENT

FOR THE

PROFESSORS OF LETTERS.

CHAP. I.

AS a counterbalance to thoſe attractive charms of learning, which ſo captivate us, when the love of ſcience has inflamed the boſoms of the ſtudious, the univerſal idea has been introduced, that the application to letters ſhortens the term of life. A terrible deduction from the delight of it, were the poſition true! What would it import that the learned ſhould be as ſuperior to the ignorant as the human ſoul is to that of brutes?—What would it ſignify, that an enlightened underſtanding is as different from one that remains uncultivated, as the cut diamond in a jewel to

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that which lies buried in the mine?—if every ſtep we take towards advancing our knowledge only leads us precipitately to the grave. Seneca equalled wiſe men to the gods; but if they periſh ſooner than others, they are more widely different from the divinity, one of whoſe principal attributes is immortality. Virtue, the ſupreme ornament of our ſouls, is the legimate offspring of ſcience, as Horace ſays, *Virtutem doctrina parit*; but how many would exclaim with Brutus, at the time of his death, O, unhappy virtue! if this very light, which crowns our brows with rays, is only a conſuming fire that reduces us to aſhes. The honour which inſeparably accompanies knowledge will but lightly ſtimulate the application of perſons, who judge that the more they riſe in the applauſe of the world, the quicker they deſcend towards the gloom of the ſepulchre.

I ſay again it is a terrible deduction, were it true; a horrid phantom, which lying athwart the portal of Wiſdom's palace, would detain from entering, thoſe who are moſt enamoured of her charms. He, therefore, will do much ſervice to the republic of letters, who can baniſh this unjuſt idea from the world. The Stoics attempted to deſtroy the force of it, by telling

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us that life and death were indifferent in themſelves, and that we ought to have no choice in either; but they were ſo far from perſuading other men of this doctrine, that I am in doubt whether they believed it themſelves, and that, as Claudian ſays,

——Munere carior omnia
Adſtringit ſua quemque ſalus.

The only method of taking away this impediment to the purſuit of letters, is to prove that honourable occupation not to be contrary to life. I know I am going to fight the world, for all are of a contrary opinion. I will attempt, however, to eaſe learning from this burthen, and demonſtrate the common opinion to be a general error originated from want of reflection.

CHAP. II.

THE great foundation of my thinking in this manner is experience, to which if due attention had been paid, the contrary opinion would not have gained ſuch ground. I only

only beg any perſon who entertains this idea to conſider whether the ſtudious perſons he has known have died more immaturely than other men. To make the compariſon exact, we muſt conſider the univerſities and colleges, where learned men are aſſembled, and compare them with an equal number of perſons occupied in other employments, and even without any occupation at all. You will find the number of thoſe who arrive to old age pretty equal. This I can aſſure to be a fact, as I made the calculation with all poſſible exactneſs. There is no univerſity where four or five, out of thirty or forty, have not paſſed the age of ſeventy years. The ſame is obſerved of thoſe who follow the courts of juſtice. We ſhall not find a greater number of that age among thoſe who paſs their lives free from every care. The force of this argument will be ſeen more ſtrongly by conſidering religious orders, where the compariſon is eaſily made. We ſhall find a greater, or at leaſt an equal number of old men among thoſe who are occupied in ſtudy, as among thoſe who are deſtined to the ſervice of the choir, or the management of the convent's eſtates. If you will make this compariſon, you will find I am not miſtaken.

Lucian

Lucian, treating of perſons of long life, gives a liſt of thoſe who applied to letters in ancient times, and arrived to a great age. Among the famous philoſophers alone he reckons eighteen who paſſed eighty years, among whom are ſome who attained even the age of ninety. Solon, Thales of Mileſium, and Pittacus, who were reckoned among the ſeven wiſe men of Greece, arrived each to the age of one hundred years. Zeno, prince of the Stoic ſect, was ninety-eight. Democritus one hundred and four. Zenophilus, the Pythagorean, one hundred and five. The ſame author, Lucian, brings another long liſt of hiſtorians and poets. He alſo obſerves, that perſons who follow literature have lived longer than others in all countries, upon account of the greater care they take in their diet; and he cites for example the ſacred writers among the Egyptians; the interpreters of their fables among the Aſſyrians and Arabians; the Brachmans in India; and in general all thoſe who have followed philoſophy with application.

Though Lucian attributes the long life of perſons addicted to letters to their regimen, yet it does not weaken our preſent reaſoning. For if ſtudy was to ſhorten our lives, as is the general

general notion, the moſt that diet could do, would be to make us live as long as other men; but we do not here ſee an equality alone, but that they live longer.—Beſides, as moſt learned perſons are temperate in all things, it may be conſidered as a conſequence of literature.

CHAP. III.

THIS is further confirmed by the example of the moſt ſtudious men in our times. Cardinal Henry Norris, of the order of Auguſtines, may be reckoned among this number, who is ſaid to have ſtudied fourteen hours every day before his elevation to that dignity. The famous Caramuel is alſo of this number, who ſays of himſelf, in his prologue to his fundamental theology, that he dedicated the ſame number of hours every day to the purſuit of learning. The famous Benedictine monk, John de Mabilion, is alſo one of this liſt, known and venerated through the world for his many and excellent works. Likewiſe the indefatigable Frenchman, Anthony Arnald, whoſe blameable

ardor for Janſeniſm does not take away the wonder of his having written more than one hundred and thirty volumes. Alſo the laborious Dominican frier, Natal Alexander, in whoſe immenſe works, though the material quantity is great, the erudition is ſtill greater. Alſo the two great Jeſuit writers, Father Athanaſius Kircher, and Father Daniel Papebroche. Likewiſe the learned ſon of the great Bazil, our countryman, Father Michael Perez, a living library, and the oracle of the univerſity of Salamanca. All theſe perſons, whoſe lives were a continual ſtudy extended beyond the common bounds their well employed years. Henry of Norris lived to the age of 73. Caramuel to that of 78. Mabilion to 75. Anthony Arnald to 82. I do not know exactly the age of Natal Alexander, but that he lived a great while is undoubted; for he was born in the year 39 of the laſt century, and a few years ago I heard he was ſtill living, but entirely blind. In the hiſtorical dictionary printed in the year 1718, though it ſpeaks largely of Natal Alexander, it ſays nothing of his death, from whence I judge he was ſtill living, as that book generally mentions the death of thoſe perſons concerning whom it ſpeaks. As

to

to Father Perez I am credibly informed that he is now 90 years old.

We may add to theſe the example of William Poſtel, a native of Normandy, as being a perſon of much celebrity, though not ſo modern as the others. He was a great traveller, and cloſely addicted to his ſtudies, though unhappy in having left marks in his works, not only of having abandoned the catholic religion, but even chriſtianity itſelf. Some conſider him as the firſt chief of the deiſts. Bacon ſays of him, that he lived to the age of 120 years; other authors, however, have aſſerted, that he did not arrive to a hundred; and the laſt edition of the dictionary of Moreri gives him only 75. The age therefore of this learned man muſt remain in doubt; but the examples we have brought are ſufficient to prove experimentally that ſtudy is not at variance with long life.

CHAP. IV.

REASON alſo ſupports experiment. Study, when it ſuits with our genius, and is not purſued with extreme rigor, rather

pleaſes than fatigues us. It cannot, therefore, be contrary to nature, or prejudicial to our health. I have put the two limitations of being agreeable to our genius, and not too rigorous, becauſe every occupation is hurtful, which exceeds our ſtrength, or contradicts our inclination. What can be more agreeable than being in company with the moſt learned men of paſt ages, which is enjoyed by reading their books. If a clever man can ſo much entertain us by his converſation, how much more can ſo many excellent authors do it, whom we meet with in a library. What charms are there in tracing the hiſtory of all ages, the geography of all regions, and the aſtronomy of all the heavens! Infinite is the ſatisfaction of the philoſopher in his purſuit of fugitive nature! How ſuperabundant the extacy of the divine, who traces through the glaſs of revelation the myſteries of grace! Though it is certain that upon many ſubjects we cannot diſcover the ſprings upon which they hang, or aſcertain their truth; yet, the underſtanding is carried on with a pleaſing deſire of following thoſe ſubtle reaſonings, by which ſo many perſons of ſublime talents have carried on their reſearches. This advantage is particularly to be enjoyed in the ſtudy of mathematics; the application to which

always

always increaſes the empire of truth. From hence ariſes that extacy which ſeizes upon thoſe who follow theſe purſuits. Archimedes was drawing geometrical figures upon paper, while the enemy was ſpreading fire and ſlaughter through his native country, Syracuſe. The Frenchman, Franciſco Vieta, inventor of the ſpecious algebra, often remained three days and nights without eating or drinking, abſorbed in his mathematical inveſtigations. Let any perſon tell me if there is any other pleaſure in the world which can ſo far raviſh its votaries.

Thoſe who follow dry ſtudies for the inſtruction of others muſt tread more thorny paths. But even this arid field, when fertilized by their toils, produces beautiful flowers. Every new thought which ſtrikes them is an object of triumph to the imagination. The progeny of the mind is contrary to that of nature. Its conception is toilſome, but its birth pleaſing. The happineſs of authors conſiſts in their thinking that what ſtrikes them muſt pleaſe the reſt of the world, whether their works are read in a book, or heard from a chair or pulpit. In every ſtroke of their pen, they admire a happy offspring of their underſtanding, which makes them diſregard the pains they took in the creation of it.

Ovid's

Ovid's friend, therefore, gave him wiſe counſel, to alleviate his misfortunes by ſtudy.

Scribis ut oblectem ſtudio lachrymabile tempus.

This is the greateſt of diverſions, and which every perſon has in his power. I muſt confeſs, however, that there is great difference between voluntary ſtudy, and that which is forced upon us. One is always agreeable, but the other has ſomething in it which fatigues; as when we are obliged to oppoſe a theſis in the ſchools, or write a ſermon in a hurry. But theſe are caſes which rarely happen. Even in forced ſtudies we have the ſatisfaction of advancing our knowledge, which is the common deſire of all reaſonable beings. Beſides, thoſe of great genius ſuffer but little labour, as they can comply in a ſhort time with what they are obliged to do.

CHAP. V.

BESIDES the teſtimony of experience and reaſon, a philoſopher gives his vote in our cauſe, who, by diligently ſtudying all nature,

nature, has moſt obſerved what favours or hinders length of life. He is undoubtedly the author who has written moſt extenſively and decidedly on this ſubject. The learned will know by theſe words, that I mean Francis Bacon, in his eſtimable work of the Hiſtory of Life and Death; where, running through all the profeſſions moſt adapted to long life, after placing in the firſt rank a life of contemplation, as that of monks and hermits, he places immediately after it the ſtudy of letters, in theſe words: "Philoſophers, rhetoricians and "grammarians, come immediately after theſe in "the length of their life." The reaſon he gives is this: "Theſe alſo live in eaſe, and are "employed in reflections, which having nothing "to do with the cares of life, have conſe-"quently nothing corroding in them, but "charm with their variety. Their time is "alſo at their own diſpoſal, and they paſs "their hours in thoſe employments which beſt "pleaſe them."

I muſt confeſs, however, that this reaſon has no weight with thoſe learned perſons whoſe maintenence depends upon their ſtudy. Phyſicians and lawyers, upon whoſe knowledge depends not only their honour, but their intereſts,

tereſts, have many cares to fight through, which counterbalance the pleaſure they may receive from reading. In theſe profeſſions the ſweetneſs of ſtudy is much counterbalanced by the emulation and diſputes which happen when rivals meet. This is a mental war, which, though without bloodſhed, proclaims the ardor of their boſoms, by the report which iſſues from their voices.

CHAP. VI.

AFTER having proved my opinion from experience, reaſon, and authority, I muſt anſwer one objection, that may be made to me, of the frequent complaints the learned make of their bodily indiſpoſitions. There are few perſons given to ſtudy who do not complain of colds, rheumatiſms, and other diſorders. Upon this account many phyſicians have written treatiſes upon the preſervation of the health of the learned, as Ficinus de Studioſorum Valetudine tuenda; and Pemphlus de Togatorum, Valetudine tuenda. Likewiſe Bernardino Romazzini

Romazzini de Literatorum morbis. Now it is certain that every habitual indiſpoſition, be it ever ſo light, eſpecially if it attacks the brain, is a ſecret worm which preys upon our life. The duration of it muſt, therefore, be ſhorter in profeſſors of letters than in other men.

But this argument is not ſo ſtrong as it appears to be. Colds and rheumatiſms are ſo common, that we hear them complained of, not only by ſtudents, but *petit maitres*. All complain of vapours; not that they are more common, but that we are more fanciful. They are rather in our mouths than in our bodies, and the cry againſt them is greater than the hurt we receive.

Secondly, it is uncertain that any light habitual indiſpoſition ſhortens our lives. On the contrary, ſome there are which prolong them. Such are the evacuations from colds, which happen to us from time to time. By means of theſe the body is diſburdened of thoſe bad juices which oppreſs it, and which increaſing, would give riſe to ſome dangerous diſorder. From hence many invalids live for a long time, while the ſtrongeſt perſons die in the flower of their age. In the former the body is by little

and little eaſed of thoſe humours which oppreſs it, and do not break out in the ſtrong man till they are come to ſuch a height as to overpower nature.

Thirdly, if the aphoriſm of Hippocrates is true, that a perſon of a ſtrong habit of body is in danger, the contrary muſt be equally ſo, that a weak conſtitution lengthens life. This conſequence is neceſſary, and more particularly, as Hippocrates adds to what he has ſaid, that a man who feels himſelf in perfect health, ought immediately to endeavour to weaken the robuſt habit of his body. I, however, ſhall never be governed by this aphoriſm, if the ſenſe of it is according to the letter. Finally, the health of perſons is not ſo much hurt by ſtudy as is commonly thought. I have and ſtill continue to live with ſuch, and I do not hear theſe great complaints, or ſee theſe bad diſorders. Ramazzini and other Phyſicians ſay that ſtudy makes men of a melancholy and fretful diſpoſition. I have experienced nothing of this in myſelf, or in thoſe who have ſtudied more than I have done. On the contrary, the more learned they are, the more tranquil they ſeem to be. In the works of the moſt famous writers, we perceive

perceive a harmony which breathes through them, unknown to the vulgar.

CHAP. VII.

WHAT I have here ſaid muſt be underſtood with ſome reſtrictions. The firſt is what I have before mentioned, that we muſt not ſtudy to exceſs. It is not always the number of books we read, but the circumſtances that attend the peruſal of them, which determines this point. He certainly has read too much who finds himſelf greatly fatigued. Books ought to be laid aſide when they create a ſenſible wearineſs, becauſe our ſtudy will do little good, and the continuation of it much harm. We ought never to read if we find our head oppreſſed, nor deprive ourſelves of the repoſe neceſſary to human nature, by which we are rendered incapable of renewing our attention.

We muſt take care, ſecondly, to be cautious in the quality of what we eat or drink, which will hurt ſtudious perſons much more than thoſe occupied in the affairs of the world.

Thirdly, we muſt intermix a little bodily exerciſe with that of the mind. Here I think we may remark with Plutarch, that the exerciſe of reading aloud, or diſputing, is one of the moſt uſeful which there is for our health, and the ſtrength of our body; for the motion of our breaſt, which produces the voice, not only gives exerciſe to our limbs, but to the very entrails and moſt vital parts (lib. de tuenda bona valetudine). And a little lower, "the voice is "an agitation of the animal ſpirits, not lightly "or externally, but in their very inmoſt receſſes. "It increaſes the natural heat, ſubtilizes the "blood, purges the veins, and opens the ar-"teries. It does not ſuffer any ſuperfluous hu-"mours to condenſe or adhere together, but "they ſubſide like dregs, from thoſe veſſels "where our food is received and digeſted." Great is the advantage to the profeſſion of ſtudents to have within their ſphere ſo wholeſome an exerciſe.

My fourth advice is, that perſons of ſtudy ſhould relieve their application by ſome honeſt diverſions, which not only give ſtrength to the body, but alſo to the mind; for mirth unfolds our genius, and renders it lively. Thoſe who write want this recreation moſt, eſpecially if they

they are naturally of a melancholy diſpoſition. My laſt advice is to vary your ſtudies; for variety pleaſes the mind in this as well as other employments, and whatever pleaſes ſtrengthens it. The reading of a freſh book relieves the wearineſs which we have ſuffered from a former. This is to be done, if in our power, for all are not capable of giving their attention to different ſubjects. Our ſouls are limited, but ſome more than others. There are thoſe whoſe extenſion is ſo very confined, that they can only follow one particular ſcience, and if they apply to more, they will become like the Biſcayan, who forgot his own language, and did not learn the Caſtilian.

F I N I S.